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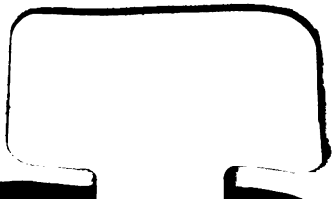


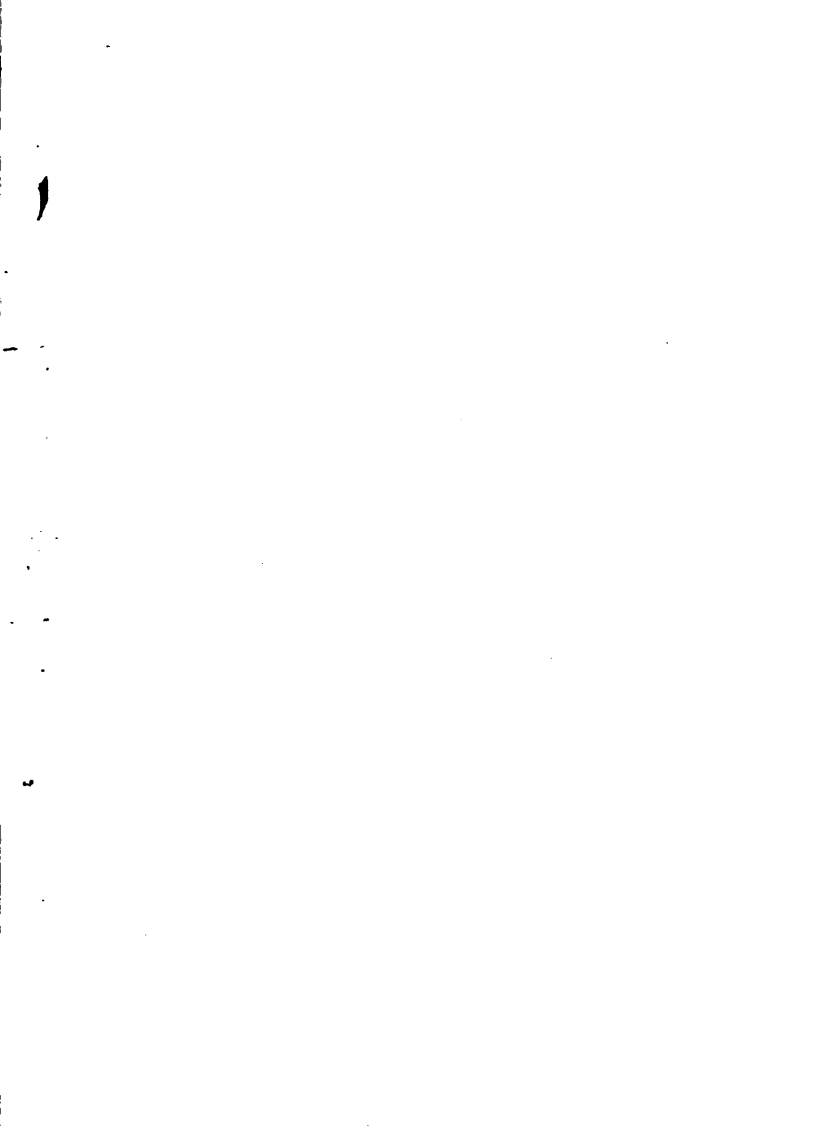
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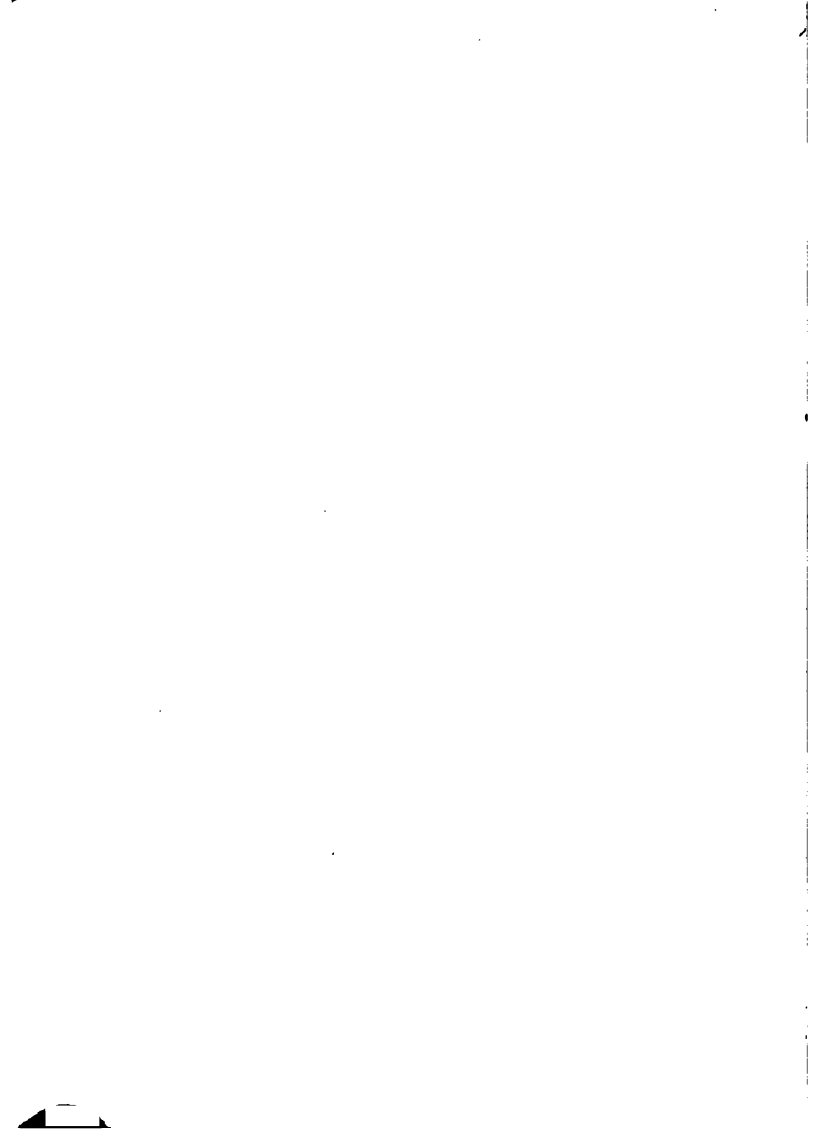
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GLORIA

A NOVEL

BY

B. PEREZ GALDÓS

FROM THE SPANISH BY CLARA BELL

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

REVISED AND CORRECTED IN THE UNITED STATES

NEW YORK
WILLIAM S. GOTTSBERGER, PUBLISHER
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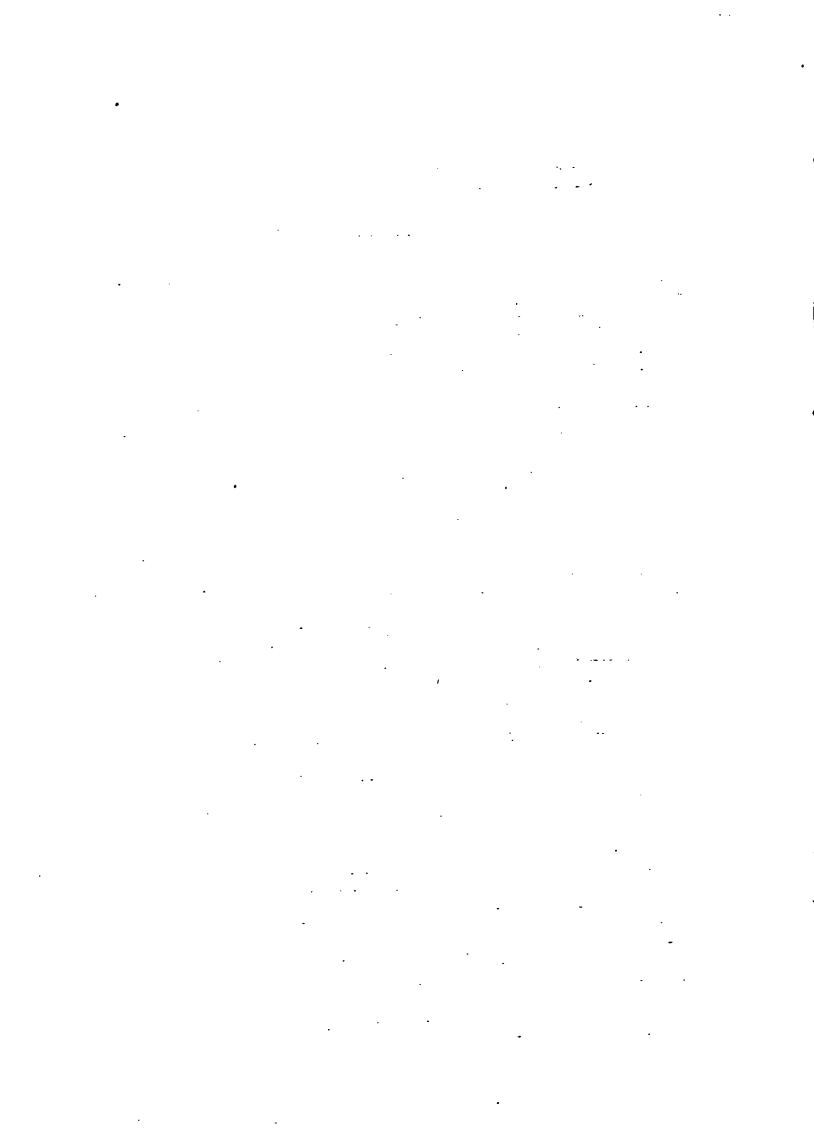
PRESS OF
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NEW YORK

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I AM prompted to put this story before an English-reading public, not merely as a sketch of Spanish life—which it essentially is—but as a study of nature. The novelty of the scene, the distinctness and variety of the characters, and the liberal justice of the author's views—never put forward excepting dramatically—all raise it above the level of commonplace.

A translation is at best but the shadow of an original, however clearly cast; form and movement may remain but light and color are lost. Still, I hope that the shadow I have outlined may allow the reader to recognize the merits of the work—the charm of the two lovers, the equal and various goodness of the four Lantiguas, the humorous individuality of the braggart Curé, and the three religious gossips, of Caifás, Amarillo and Samson.

CLARA BELL.



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GLORIA.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE CURTAIN RISES.

IN the distance, on a green hill bathed on the north by the ocean, and on the east by a meandering river, lies Ficóbriga, a town which it is vain to search for in any but an imaginary map of Spain, where indeed I found it. We will walk towards it, for the brilliant day and the freshness of the aromatic air are an invitation to wander. It is June, a delicious month in this seaboard district when the storm spares it the visitation of its terrific hand. To-day even the lashing and turbulent Bay of Biscay is at rest.

It allows the passing vessels to ride unmolested on its calm surface and plashes sleepily on the shore; while in the depths of the hollows, up the narrow creeks, through the rifts and over the rocks, its myriad tongues murmur sounds of peace. The undulating hills rise gently from the sea to

the mountains, each one asserting itself against the rest as though they vied with each other as to which should reach the summit.

Little country-houses of quaint aspect are scattered throughout the whole extent of the landscape, but at one point they seem to concentrate and combine, one sheltering itself against another, uniting in short to form that noble civic community, which is to be known to future ages as Ficóbriga. In the midst of it rises an unfinished tower, like a head bereft of its hat; nevertheless its two belfry windows are a pair of keen and watchful eyes, and within are three metal tongues which call the congregation to mass in the morning, and lift their voices in prayer as night swiftly falls.

All round the little town—for we have now reached it and can see—luxuriant harvest-fields and smiling pastures argue a considerable amount of agricultural skill. Wild brushwood and undergrowth enclose here and there an orchard—with honeysuckle covered with perfumed bunches of pale blossom like spread hands, thorny furze, enormous clumps of fern waving and fanning each other, a few green-crowned pines, and fig-trees innumerable—to which it no doubt owes its name of Ficóbriga.

And beyond, what a lovely spectacle is offered by the mountains! a vast staircase mounting to the skies. The most remote, in their pale hues, are lost among the clouds, and in the nearest we can detect many red scars looking like bleeding wounds; which in fact they are—cuts made by the miner's tool, as day by day he eats into the sturdy flanks of those giant forms. They rise precipitously towards the west, and in their remoter summits the play of light calls up the semblance of strange humps and crenellations, of towers and outworks, wens and rifts, till the monstrous pile is lost in the clouds.

After crossing a timber bridge, of which the rotting piles are half submerged in brackish mud, we mount a hill-side—we are now actually in Ficóbriga—down which the brook rushes, leaping as though not knowing whither it goes nor where the sea lies waiting to devour it; flinging itself into all the pools at high tide, and rushing out again as the sea ebbs. A few small boats float on its shallow waters, and God alone knows the toil it costs them to make a few yards of progress in the narrow passage when the breeze is sleeping and the tide bears the current downwards, toward the perilous bar.

The first houses we come to are miserable

enough, and the next not much better. Ficóbriga is a poor community of fishermen and laborers, a few wealthy natives repose on their commercial laurels in a dozen or so of pretty and convenient residences. But what streets! good heavens!

The crowded and squalid houses seem ready to tumble down, and from the miserable balconies hang nets, blue shirts, wet capes, and a thousand varieties of discolored and ragged raiment, while from the rotting eaves hang bunches of maize and of cuttle-fish left to dry, and long strings of garlic.

Passing in front of the Town Hall, which fills up one end of the Plaza, with an air of profound conviction that it is worth looking at, we reach the Abbey church, an ancient structure, half hidden among houses as old as itself, and composing a forlorn and wretched group of buildings; then turning our backs on the town, we come once more to the mouth of the river we first saw higher up, and here we reach a small plaza shaded by two acacias and a gnarled poplar. By this little shaded plot—and mark it well, for it is the scene of my story—stands a house, or, more correctly speaking, a palace, for as compared with its ruinous neighbors, its appearance is really magnificent. It is in fact composed of two buildings, one very old and

decorated with extravagant heraldic creatures, while the other is new and elegant, almost artistic, in the style of a villa, or cottage orné, as it is the fashion to say. To the south and east it is enclosed in a lovely garden, full of waving pine-trees, acacias in full bloom, planes, magnolias and conifers of various species, and between the verdurous branches we discern the five windows of the ground-floor rooms. There is a plentiful variety of shrubs; camellias asserting themselves almost as trees, clipped myrtles, tamarisks, and rose-trees, with a crowded undergrowth of pansies, geraniums, crown imperial and such small garden-folk; and these we can see through the openings in the iron fence wherever they are not overgrown by the officious creepers which seem eager to prevent the passer-by from knowing anything that goes on in the garden.

This delightful abode is situated on a spot whence the sea lies open to the north, and commands a view to the east of the wide and varied coast with the little river and the bridge, to the west of Ficóbriga, and to the south of the tilled land and the mountains. It is surrounded by a luxuriant and umbrageous growth of trees, and fanned by healthy breezes. It is a home that seems created for selfish love or for the meditative

life of the student; what happiness for a soul touched by passion or by the allurements of scientific curiosity to find so delicious a retreat wherein to bury itself, seeking by means of a seeming death to the outer world a wider life for itself alone.

The house itself is one of those which give the traveller pause and say to him "Can you guess, now, who lives here?"

Hush! the green Persian shutter is being opened from one of the windows which look out on the garden and towards the mountains. A slender hand hastily pushes it back, and the curtain, as it moves, affords a glimpse of a woman's face. Her eyes are as black as dark care. For an instant they explore the landscape, and if light flies fast and far, they flash farther and faster. Her face shows unmistakable traces of anxious expectancy and the painful eagerness of thoughts wholly absorbed by the image of one who does not come.

Looking at the mountains ourselves, we can in fact see nothing but the mountains. The graceful figure vanishes, but soon reappears to gaze once more, growing more impatient as time flies. It would almost seem as though her eager eyes longed to see through and beyond the range of

hills; but still on the distant roads nothing is to be seen in the shape of man or beast, and from being anxious she becomes impatient, and not impatient merely, but vexed; and from vexation she grows angry, and from anger passes to despair.

This pretty house now has for us the absorbing interest which attaches to every dwelling at whose window a pretty face is to be seen; and this gentle girl, these black eyes which seek and find not, which dart angry flashes at some unseen member of the creation—! Ah! this is the way of love.

Come, we will go in.

CHAPTER II.

GLORIA AND HER FATHER.

THEY were both in a room facing the south, with a window opening on to the garden which afforded a delightful outlook and admitted delicious perfumes. The room looked more like a counting-house than anything else from the heaps of books and papers that lay in every direction, while the walls were covered with maps and engravings of saints; there were too a bust of the

Pope and a large frame containing a portrait in oil of a reverend bishop, represented with a pen in his hand.

Here, in a wide arm-chair, sat Don Juan de Lantigua, a man something on the wrong side of fifty with a grave but very sympathetic countenance, and sufficiently intelligent expression. His brow and profile were not deficient in dignity though they had no academical regularity of outline; still the dominant expression in every feature was that of iron tenacity, such as must have stamped those of heroes—when there were yet heroes and of martyrs when there were still martyrs. But as he had passed his life without being either one or the other, it did not result from that. It seemed to be merely the natural physique of a man broken by study or by labor; at the same time his face bore a perceptible trace of serene melancholy, quite distinct from the theatrical misanthropy of an '*homme incompris*.' As we learn to know him better we shall see that this saddened mood of his, which so plainly rose from the depths to the surface of his nature, was something more than a discontented temper or dissatisfaction with himself, and was in fact a profound compassion for others.

Looking at his daughter, as for the hundredth

time, she fluttered to the window, he said in a kindly tone: "Gloria, for all your fidgeting and gazing, and waiting, and going back to gaze again, our dear traveller will come none the sooner. Keep quiet till he arrives."

Gloria returned to her father's side. She was nearly eighteen, and was tall, graceful and slightly built, vivacious and restless to a fault. Her face, which usually wore a tender color, betrayed a constant feverish excitement, like that of a person who is not where he fain would be, and her eyes seemed insufficient to satisfy her insatiable need of observing all that went on around her. Behind them lurked a spirit of inexhaustible vitality which craved incessant occupation. An enchanting creature! expectant of everything, as though nothing could take place in creation that was not of importance; noting the leaf as it fell from the tree, the fly that buzzed past her, each gust of wind, every sound from the boys in the street.

Her face, which was beyond everything expressive, and seemed to speak her thoughts, was far from perfect in feature; but the defects were such as we not only pardon but actually admire. Her mouth was somewhat larger, her nose perhaps somewhat smaller than they should have been but, as they were combined, they could not

have been more charming. Her rosy lips were the fairest and sweetest fruit that the tree of beauty could have to offer to the hungry gaze of a lover. And in brilliant contrast to the freshness of this dainty detail was the flashing glory of her dark eyes which now sparkled with a sudden radiance and now drooped with slumberous langour. Over these twin stars fell their long lashes. But, look as they might, a pure and innocent soul was mirrored in them; and a depth of feeling which, though ready to develop in time did not yet burn with genuine fire, threw off sparks at every moment; still this eagerness to feel strongly was as perfectly virtuous as that of other souls which have earned canonization by the same ardent nature.

The pretty child was fashionably dressed, with elegance, but without affectation. All she wore derived grace from herself, and not a single detail of her coiffure or her dress could be wished other than it was.

At the moment of our making her acquaintance Gloria's impatience had risen to such a pitch that every feature of her face betrayed it. When she quitted the window she walked incessantly about the room, taking up one thing after another and aimlessly changing its place, moving the

chairs without any reason of increased convenience in their altered position, and staring at the pictures which she already knew by heart. The saying might have been applied to her with justice: "Before a bird flies we see that it has wings."

CHAPTER III.

GLORIA IS EXPECTING NOT A LOVER BUT A
BISHOP.

"It is ten o'clock already, papa," said the girl impatiently. "From the station at Villamojada it is not more than two hours' drive."

"True, but God knows at what hour the train may have come in," answered her father. "That rapid innovation of civilization takes certain liberties—but impatience is useless. As soon as the carriage reaches the inn at Tres Casas old Gregorio will announce its approach by discharging a handful of rockets that will rouse the whole neighborhood with their explosion. Caifás is up in the belfry watching for the first notice to start a peal of bells. Even if he neglects this, they cannot take us by surprise; they will make too much noise."

Gloria flew off again to look at the Abbey, whose ancient tower rose above the surrounding roofs, and exclaimed joyfully :

“Yes, there is Caifás with all his children watching till he sees the first rocket before striking up the chimes. Good children, very good Paco and Celina; pull hard, pull away, Sildo, pull with all your might that you may be heard all over the province.”

Her father smiled pleasantly, proving the placid contentment of his spirit at that moment.

“Papa,” said Gloria, standing before him with a resolute air, “you may lay a wager that Francisca has not basted those four fowls, nor put the fish into the oven, nor arranged the sweet dishes! That is just Francisca’s way—two hours to move each arm and two more to think about it, and nothing done—and the travellers will sit the whole blessed day expecting to be fed.”

As she spoke she rapidly went towards the door.

“Gloria, Gloria!” said her father, obliging her to stop. “Come here—don’t leave the room; listen—”

“Oh! I cannot, cannot imagine how on a busy day like this you can take things with such blessed calmness!” exclaimed the girl sitting down. “My

blood is boiling—they will arrive and nothing will be ready.”

“My child,” said the old man, “you ought to learn to be less vehement and not take so much to heart little things that are of such small importance to body or soul. When shall I teach you the calmness and balance of mind we ought always to preserve in face of the common occurrences of life? Tell me, if you throw so much eager excitability and ardor, so much energy and agitation into these trivial matters, what will you do when you meet with one or another of the graver accidents and problems of life? Reflect on this, my child, and moderate your impetuous impulses. Why, poor Francisca, whom you are so ready to accuse, might give you a lesson in this; see with what admirable method and foresight and what quiet punctuality she manages all the work of the house. She seems to be slow, and yet she does everything in time and everything thoroughly, while you, on the other hand, with your impatient haste, often make mistakes, and either finish nothing—or, if you finish it, it has all to be done over again. I have seen plenty of vehement women, bewildering ones, hasty ones, swift as the wind and bright as a flash of light, but you, child, beat them all. Thank God that He has made you kind-hearted, pious,

and virtuous, that He bestowed on you an upright and generous nature, that He implanted in your heart the gifts of faith, pure and noble feelings and His ineffable grace, leaving the excitability on the surface."

"And if it was God who gave me so many good gifts," said Gloria with all the conviction of a father of the church, "it was He too who gave me this hasty nature, this impatience of life passing slowly, this anxiety each day for to-morrow."

"Let us see. What reason can there be for the feverish restlessness into which you have been thrown by your uncle's approaching visit?"

"I have not slept for three nights," answered the girl. "Indeed what less could happen. Can we receive a Bishop like any vulgar mortal? My uncle will bring with him, besides his secretary Doctor Sedeño, perhaps two of his pages or at any rate one; and must not matters be so arranged as to do honor to such an illustrious guest? If I were to trust to Francisca I might take patience till next year. Do you suppose there is but little to do? Nothing of the kind; why the whole of the ground-floor is not enough for the party that is coming, and I am not going to set them down to a table with nothing on it but bread, wine and olives. Roque has had to make three jour-

neys to fetch what was necessary. And how about the chapel?"

"Well, and what about the chapel?"

"Nothing; but his Réverence will want to perform mass there, as he did last time. And a pretty state the chapel was in! We had to wash the Christ three times, for the flies had done his sacred person more dishonor than the Jews. The Virgin's robe was ruined. I had to burn it and make her a new one out of the velvet you bought for me. I thought we should never get the stains out of the candlesticks with all the whitening we had in the house, but luckily Caifás and I could rub hard, and it has all come as bright as gold. But, do you know, the rats have begun to eat away the feet of St. John!"

"Abominable brutes!" exclaimed Don Juan, laughing.

"There is no knowing what they will not do! But thanks to Caifás, who is so clever, he has filled up the wounds in the saint's feet with some sort of paste or putty, and with a touch of paint they have come out very well. But those rascally vermin, that respect nothing, will not do any more mischief! In three days after the rat-trap was set and baited eleven were caught, as big as wolves! And you still think I have little to do!"

"I think you have plenty to do."

"Well, then, there are the clothes I had to make for Caifás' children, that they might turn out decently to receive my uncle—and you wonder that I am incessantly in and out, and up and down. It is my way dear papa."

"It is your way—I know that; God bless you!"

"I love my uncle dearly; he is a saint, and I am so happy to think that he is going to live under the same roof with me! All that we have seems to me too little to do him honor and give him pleasure, and I should like to bring him all the wonders of a king's palace; not having these, I rack my brain to devise every luxury and prodigality to arrange a worthy reception for a man who in God's eyes—Oh! I cannot bear myself!—I cannot keep quiet—I lie awake in a perfect fever—I pass the night without sleep, thinking of Francisca's dawdling, of the chapel, of poor St. John being gnawed away, of the spotted candlesticks, of the rats, the smallness of our house for such an illustrious guest.—"

"And do you think," interrupted her father with gentle persuasion, "that my brother wants a palace and luxury and ostentation? No my child. As a disciple of Christ my brother is humble. If

GLORIA.

this house were no better than a hovel, it would be no less worthy to shelter him. Let us offer him pure hearts, fervent faith and a sincere respect for his eminent virtues, rejoicing in the glow of his presence, to observe and imitate him; let us absorb into ourselves some of the infinite treasures of his heart which is filled with the Divine Spirit, and take no care for the rest—”

“That is the first thing; but still—”

“Whether shabby and poor or resplendent with wealth the chapel will always be a sacred spot since my brother has celebrated mass there, and will again when the workmen have repaired the roof that has fallen in. And if the rats have dared to attack the feet of St. John, it is because these wretched animals—and they too are God’s creatures—found nothing more to their taste. The image is none the less that of a saint, nor would he have ceased to intercede for us, even if we had not called in the ingenious Caifás to repair the damage. Do not care so much my child for the outward appearance of things; let your spirit rise above the level of what appeals only to the senses, do not fret so much about things that will chain it too closely to the earth—that is what I desire for you. And above all your ardent eagerness about the unimportant event of a day does not please me.”

Hardly had he uttered the last words of his little lecture, when they heard a distant crackling sound in the air, then another and another, as if the angels were cracking nuts in the sky.

"There they are!" cried Gloria, all her soul glowing in her eyes.

"Yes—there is my brother," said Lantigua calmly going to the window. "He is welcome, very welcome."

CHAPTER IV.

SEÑOR DE LANTIGUA AND HIS IDEAS.

DON JUAN CRISÓSTOMO DE LANTIGUA, was the son of parents who had been of some worship in the town where we have just made his acquaintance, and years and the cares of life had already told upon him. The wealth he had been master of since 1860, the modern house and the quiet life he now enjoyed, he had derived from an uncle who had returned from Mexico with a perfect burthen of hard cash which, in a short time, he let slip from his shoulders, along with that of life, for he died in the early days of his retirement from labor. His fortune which was splendid de-

volved on his three nephews and a niece; Don Angel, at that time chaplain at Reyes Nuevos; Don Juan, a lawyer of good reputation, and their much younger brother and sister Don Buenaventura and Doña Serafinita de Lantigua. For the present it is not necessary to my purpose to speak of the two latter; I will set them aside in favor of their brothers, and at first more particularly of Don Juan de Lantigua.

This worthy man had been endowed with a passionate and fervid nature, a vivid imagination that tended to contemplation, a bright intelligence with a taste for paradox, and strong feelings, with an impulse towards exaggeration alike in his emotions and in his ideas. His first efforts in advocacy were both profitable and brilliant, and even after his uncle's inheritance had secured him an easy competency, he did not wholly abandon the legal profession. To give up all discussion and disputation would have been equivalent to giving up his life.

Absorbed by an insatiable love of learning he combined theology and the history of political science with his study of jurisprudence. He devoted himself by preference to sifting out from among the writers—mystics or historians—of the golden age of Spanish literature, all that could be

* *

regarded as of permanent value and consequently applicable to the science of government in all ages. Still, from the enthusiasm of his earlier years and from prejudices conceived he knew not how, his opinions remained pertinaciously inseparable from certain ideas; so that, even in all good faith, he was incapable of judging with complete impartiality either the lives or the works of those who for so many centuries have been employed in discussing the means of raising the level of humanity.

His contemplative bent led him to regard religious faith not merely as the ruling and master power of the individual through his conscience, but also as an official institution, whose function it was to rule and guide from outside all human affairs. He ascribed a magic charm to authority, and no force or place, or a very small one, to liberty. A few years after having thrown himself into this abyss of studies—this whirlpool of controversy—Don Juan de Lantigua emerged again strong in syllogisms and erudition; with impressive self-confidence he defied the frivolous and disbelieving crowd. Politics invited him to mount the tribune, and once there, the cloud which had concentrated in itself so much passion and so much learning broke in thunder and lightning against the age we live in.

The new Isaiah's eloquence was withering. His enemies—for he had some in the flesh—his enemies said: "Lantigua is the advocate of all the Bishops and Curates, he makes a harvest out of cases of spoliation, of chaplaincies, and of ecclesiastical discipline. It is but fair that he should flatter and serve those who give him work." These impertinences, common enough in these days, only made Don Juan smile; he never took the trouble to defend himself against the charge because, as he said, it was well not to deprive fools of the right of talking folly.

He was esteemed by all as a man of deep and immutable convictions, an honorable gentleman in his social relations, and of a blameless character. In daily practical life Lantigua agreed very kindly with men of the most opposite opinions, and even knew them as intimate friends, very high in his regard, though without ever being able to convince them. But in the realm of ideas he was irreconcilable, and his stony fixity could never be shaken from its foundation by anything or anybody. The storms of the revolution of '48, the Roman republic, the unity of Italy, the fall of the Austrian dominion there, the humiliation of the French, the destruction of the temporal power of the Pope, the reconstruction of Germany—a Min-

erva sprung from the brain of Bismarck—and other less important events which, bearing only on Spain itself, were no more than squalls passing across the sky of Europe—produced no effect on the mind of this remarkable worthy beyond an increased conviction that all humanity was perverse and desperate, and needed a strait-waist-coat.

These facts and other recent disasters on his native soil brought Lantigua to a miserable pitch of irritation, and gave a stern and gloomy tone to his writings and his discourses. He fulminated abuse of his century, prophesying of a confusion of tongues and from the confusion a dispersion, and from the dispersion slavery; until a revival of the Catholic faith in hearts made fruitful of good through misfortunes, should reorganize the nations and gather them in under the sheltering robe of the Church. According to his views the much-talked-of laws of human progress were leading us to a Nebuchadnezzar. On this point Lantigua would rather die than yield. And indeed how could he yield? Those who have reduced all their conceptions to the overwhelming, but stultifying formula, "Christ or Barabbas," are forced to allow themselves to be driven to the extremest consequences, since the smallest concession is in

their opinion equivalent to ranging themselves on the side of Barabbas.

CHAPTER V.

HOW HE BROUGHT UP HIS DAUGHTER.

DON JUAN DE LANTIGUA did not in his own person direct the education of his only daughter. Besides the fact that his business as a lawyer and as an orator allowed him but little leisure to devote to her, he thought that to consign her to a school was all-sufficient. The important point was to know in what school sound principles on every point were to be found. It must be mentioned that he had become a widower after fourteen years of married life. His worthy wife had presented him with Gloria, then twelve years old, and two infants, both gone to Heaven—as was said in Ficóbriga—before they had fairly learned to walk on earth.

Gloria, after remaining for a few years at a school named in honor of one of the most sacred attributes of the Virgin Mary, returned home mistress of the catechism, at the head of her class in history, sacred and profane, with many, though

confused ideas of geography, astronomy, and physics; murdering French without thoroughly knowing her own language, and possessed of but a slender knowledge of the arts of needle-work. She knew the "Duty of Man" by heart, without missing a single syllable or even a letter, and was quite a mistress in piano-forte playing, deeming herself fully capable of performing any one of those horrible fantasias which are the delight of young-lady pianists, the dread of their hearers, and an insult to musical art.

Lantigua made her repeat to him some passages of sacred history, and did not seem satisfied.

"In the schools of the present day," said he, "they train the minds of children to a set of ideas just as they do their fingers to the key-board. They think, as they play, and repeat in mechanical phrases the conceptions of others."

One day when Gloria, seeing him immersed in some abstruse commentary on the religious unity imposed upon Nations after the attainment of political union, declared that, in her opinion, the kings of Spain had done very wrongly in expelling the Jews and Moors from the country. Lantigua opened his eyes very wide, and after gazing at her in silence during a short spasm of extreme astonishment, he said:

"This is more learned than I could have expected! What do you understand about such things? Go and play the piano."

Gloria flew off like a bird inspired to glad song, and seating herself on the music-stool she ran her fingers over the keys; she began to play something that sounded like a perfect medley. Lantigua knew nothing about music. He had heard the names of Mozart and Offenbach and all music was the same to him, that is to say, was idle amusement. Still his superior intelligence and delicate taste enabled him to distinguish instinctively the enormous differences between the various kinds of music he had heard and, generally speaking, everything that Gloria played seemed to him detestable.

"You cannot imagine what I would give my child," said he, "to hear you play anything but those dreadful grinding organ tunes. Do not tell me that all music is the same, for I certainly have heard somewhere—in church perhaps or it may be in a theatre—solemn and pathetic compositions which touched something deeper down than the mere outward senses, which stirred my soul and moved me to blissful meditation. Do you know nothing of that sort?"

Gloria went through her whole stock of fanta-

sias, nocturnes, "Fleurs de salon," and "Pluies de perles" without lighting on the solemn and touching works that would satisfy her father's exalted demands. In the cause of truth which overrides everything, even the prestige and fair report of my gentle heroine, it must be confessed that Gloria thrashed and thumped the piano in a very lamentable manner, as though the notes had been convicted of a horrible crime and deserved castigation for the space of three hours daily.

"That is enough for this evening little one," said Don Juan. "Take a book and read awhile."

Gloria went to her father's library, looked along every shelf, and opened a book which she disdainfully restored to its place. She chose another, read a few pages, but was soon tired of it.

"What are you looking for? Novels?" asked her father, coming into the room and surprising her in her search—"I have a few somewhere—here."

"Ivanhoe—" said Gloria reading a title.

"That is a good one; but leave it alone for the present. Very few novels have found their way in here. Of all the nastiness and rubbish that every day has brought forth in France and Spain during the last forty years, you will not find a single

page—of good works, there are a few, very few—but I think that you will find buried in some corner Chateaubriand, Swift, Bernardin de St. Pierre, and above all my prime favorite Manzoni.”

Nevertheless Don Juan prohibited novels for some little time to come for even good ones, he said, fired the imagination and prompted wild hopes and fears in a girl's inexperienced heart, and prejudiced her judgment by giving a dangerously false poetic coloring to the persons and things that she came into contact with.

On the other hand Gloria, if she might not read for herself, might read for her father. Don Juan as a result of overwork in study, of the constant excitement of his brain, and of the late hours and sleepless nights which were occasioned by his passion for political agitation, was losing his sight. He could not read at all at night, but, as the work he was engaged upon required at every page constant reference to the texts of Quevedo, Navarrete, and Saavedra Fajardo, he established his daughter as his reader. Don Juan had been for some time engaged on a commentary on the ascetic and philosophical discoveries of Quevedo, for that colossal genius of satire rests from his titanic laughter in laconic gravity. Gloria read aloud the “Life of St. Paul.” “The Cradle and the Grave,”

and "The Four Plagues of the World." Then she lost herself in the "Economy of God and Dominion of Christ," and as the learned collector of the books had been happily inspired to bind up in the same volume the incomparable "History of Buscon," Gloria, as often as her father released her from reading in order to write, simply turned over a hundred pages or so, and stifling herself to choke down the laughter which struggled to burst out, she amused herself with the delectable naughtiness of the great Pablo.

On other occasions, as Don Juan made no objection to the classical works of the 'golden age' of Spanish literature, Gloria took possession of various volumes and read "Virtue and religion à la mode," by Fulgencio de Ribera, she had nearly, very nearly plunged into "La Pícara Justina," but Lantigua laid hands upon it and only permitted Guzman de Alfarache. Unluckily the same volume contained *La Celestina*.*

* The reader who is curious to appreciate the character of Gloria's studies may reasonably compare the works of Quevedo with the coarser writings of Chaucer, with *Hudibras* or *Gulliver's Travels*. Quevedo was however as great in religious controversy and moral essays as in satire. The adventures of Don Pablo el Buscon, are by some writers ranked only next to *Don Quixote*. This work has been frequently reprinted, and translated into English, French and German. The works of Navarrete and of Saavedra Fajardo are contained in Vol. XXV, of a collection of Spanish authors, edited by Ariball and others.—Madrid, 1846; 55 volumes in all.—*Translator*.

CHAPTER VI.

THE YOUNG LADY EXPLAINS HER VIEWS.

WITH no other guide than her own healthy and unprejudiced judgment, Gloria, discussing one day with her father the old vexed subject of the novels which a young girl might be permitted to read, said that the mischievous literature of which Spain was so boastful on the ground of its splendor of style, seemed to her a wretched growth; immoral and irreverent, in short opposed to religion; since it was in fact a standing apology for evil, for dissipation and buffoonery, and for all the pernicious maxims and coarse amusements that degrade a nation; and she concluded by declaring with really audacious boldness that all the graces of those reprobates—the heroes of such novels—even if at first they might please her fancy, would soon nauseate and bore her—nay that they were often in themselves indelicate or disgusting and had tended to debase the language.

If we may believe witnesses of this conversation, whose veracity is above suspicion, Gloria, *mutatis mutandis* went on to the effect that any

one who had the courage to plunge into the labyrinth of immoralities and falsities, of coarseness and baseness which are painted with so much relish in this class of works, could only conclude from them that the society of the seventeenth century was a society of artists, as regards the imagination, but, as to conscience, in its dotage; but he would learn to understand the decadence of the Spanish race which had preserved no greater virtue than a mere blind heroism, and no moral vigor efficient to supply the lack of a pure standard of virtue and of any single-hearted religion untainted by superstition.

It is said that Don Juan, as he listened to this tirade, found himself greatly confused and perplexed; not so much by reason of the strangeness of these views, as of the calm frankness with which his daughter expressed them; and his perplexity was followed by a real alarm at the precocious aptitude displayed by Gloria for argument and paradox, but, as he observed that the erratic character of her mind was seconded by a good deal of spirit, he concluded that the best method would be to guide her with gentleness into the right way. Acting on this idea, he desired his daughter to go through a long course of Calderon's plays, accompanying this by a daily dose of the mystics and

religious writers in prose and verse, so as to produce a radical change in her ideas of Spanish society in 'the golden age.'

The young lady did in fact follow the course prescribed by her father, and at the end of a few weeks admitted that her views had changed a little, but by no means radically. She explained, in homelier phraseology than I shall use to render her meaning quite clear, that in the social life of those times, she observed, besides the faults before mentioned, a feverish tendency towards idealism which, though it gave birth to splendid results in poetry and the arts, was meanwhile undermining the foundations of society. She was disgusted alike by the scoundrels, the ruffians, the highwaymen, by the students, soldiers and writers, by the judges and physicians, the husbands, the wives and the lovers of that period of literature; and yet all the types bore a fascinating stamp of veracity. As a protest against this tribe of rabble, the gallants and ladies, the illustrious fathers and the rustic hidalgos of these dramas and comedies surely ought, with their elevated notions and brilliant deeds, to have been able to establish the reign of justice and virtue; but, according to Gloria's judgment it was the very beauty of these inimitable types that gave this whole literature the mel-

ancholy semblance of a person who during a whole century had been striving after an object and had failed in attaining it. Lantigua smiled at so obvious an absurdity, and Gloria declared—using of course a simpler set of words—that this ideal of love and honor was not the best nor the soundest foundation for insuring the moral stability of the social edifice, and she then went on to speak of the mystics, pointing out in them a deficiency of balance between imagination and judgment, and asserting that their writings, beautiful as they were in many places, could never serve as a guide to the generality of minds since they must fail to be understood by them. She summed up on this point by saying that she could not bear that religion should be discussed but with the utmost simplicity and singleness, and for that reason esteemed the plain catechism of the schools above all the treatises and dissertations of the mystics for it used language as plain as that of Christ himself and made all clear.

At this juncture, it seems that Don Juan de Lantigua, not without laughing at his daughter, made some observations on the profound philosophy and studies of the Divinity and of man which were contained in these works.

Gloria maintaining that the society which, ac-

ording to her father's ideas, was a perfect type, had over-refined and so weakened the ideal of religion, allowing itself to be misled by these very outward symbols which that idealistic religion made use of, not merely as useful auxiliaries but, at the same time, as a homage paid by truth to the eternal archetype of beauty.

"These novels about buffoons and reprobates," said Gloria in conclusion. "These comedies full of carpet knights, gallant no doubt, and discreet, though not always spotless from the point of view of Christian morality—these long dissertations in which I lose my way from my total inability to follow the thread of the involved argument, give me a very sufficient idea of the people for whom such things were written. I see that they must have had very elastic consciences and extreme toleration for the greater number of those vices which in all ages have soiled and degraded man. There were among them, no doubt, generous characters, who honestly thought they were fulfilling their mission and giving play to the nobler impulses of the soul, upholding like a sacred standard, high above the universal turpitude, an ideal of honor and of faith. But still the people, whom they had never taught to discern, that were merely vegetating in vice, unfit for honest labor, and

dreaming of wars which led to pillage or of conquests, which led to easy fortune, understood nothing that was not addressed to their sense; they cared for nothing—not even for the sublime mystery of the Eucharist—that did not offer itself to their apprehension in the guise of a comedy.

“On one hand I see the base and vulgar reality, an epidemic of squalid wretchedness, of ragged and vacuous indolence in which the mass of the nation seethed—asking its doom from the king, from the nobles the overflow from their luxurious tables, from the monks their broken victuals, and from the destiny that governs nations new lands to plunder. On the other side I see nothing better than well-fed men before whose eyes shone an ideal of glory and of dominating the universe, a vision which presently vanished, leaving them with their arquebuses in their hands ready cocked—to kill sparrows! In art again I see two aspects: the poets who sing of love and honor and the mystics and cloister poets who passed their days in seeking fresh formulas in which to express to the vulgar the sacred dogmas of faith. One of these muses exalts human love, the other divine love, but they use the same poetical forms, the same similes, almost the same words, no doubt because all the languages of the

world were made for human use and everything has to be uttered in human guise.

“The poets, the great warriors, the monks, theologians and men of cultivation had vague notions of a better polity and of a moral state superior to that of the paupers, the destitute, the ragged villains and the rest of the lower orders. They disagreed among themselves; things were not going right, but they knew not how to mend them. These demanded bread, good fortune, and creature comforts, and finding no one who would give them these, they robbed whoever they could; those craved for glory, exalted love, ecstatic faith, religion, chivalry, perfect justice, perfect goodness, perfect beauty, still they could never agree. Cervantes seized upon these two opposing principles which stood confronted in that fever-stricken society, and wrote the most admirable book that Spain and that century have produced. It is sufficient only to read that book in order to understand that the state of society which gave it birth could never succeed in finding a solid foundation on which to build up a stable moral and political structure.—And why? Because Don Quixote and Sancho Panza could never succeed in meeting each other half-way.”

It seems that on the occasion when Gloria, in

her own fashion delivered herself of these opinions there were present besides her father half a dozen or so important personages who enjoyed a reputation for sagacity.

They praised the young girl's acuteness and intelligence, smiled at her wit, and admired her quaint originality, skilfully mingling criticism with gallantry, and one of them, more curious than the rest, expressed a wish to know what she understood by the meeting half-way of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza; Gloria, though in some confusion at the doubtful issue of her daring discourse, went on:

“You who are so much wiser than I am cannot have failed to perceive that if Don Quixote, like Sancho, had learned to see things in their true shapes and colors, he might perhaps have been able to realize some portion of the sublime conceptions of his great soul, just as his squire—but I will say no more, for you are laughing at me. I know that what I have said may seem strange, and perhaps sound ill or ridiculous from me, much of it even inconsistent with truths which you know better than I—and if so account it as unsaid or as mere folly on my part.”

Later in the evening, when these learned personages had withdrawn their majestic presence,

Don Juan de Lantigua, who had been greatly put out by his daughter's extravagant opinions, reproved her with dignity, desiring her for the future to be juster in her interpretation of history and literature. He told her that a woman's intelligence was not equal to appreciate such a wide subject, since extensive reading was not sufficient for its comprehension, not even by a man of sound judgment and experienced in criticism. He told her also that much had been written by illustrious thinkers on various branches of religion, politics, and history, forming a code of opinion before which the unlearned must bow; and he ended by burlesquing the unsuitable and shocking views that Gloria had put forward, views which, if she put no check upon herself, must obviously lead her into error, heresy, and even to immorality.

Gloria retired to her bedroom—for it was by this time late—much perplexed, and there meditated for a long time; and so strong was her father's influence that she arrived at the fullest conviction that she had been guilty of endless follies, absurdities, and gross improprieties. Still, being anxious to absolve herself, she laid the blame on the books she had read, and made a vow henceforth to read nothing written or printed excepting her prayers, the household accounts,

and her uncle's letters. Then, kneeling down to say her prayers as usual, she began :

“I thank thee O God for having shown me my folly betimes !”

But when she was in bed she found that it was very difficult to leave off thinking of all sorts of wild and exciting things, for that faculty of hers for keen discernment was a fertile incubus which persistently asserted itself, giving rise to fresh and pregnant thoughts ; and she soon perceived that, though her books had no doubt served to stimulate the constant flow of various thoughts and original views, the phenomenon would not be interrupted even if she entirely gave up reading. This troubled her.

“If I cannot help thinking,” she said to herself, “I can at least hold my tongue.”

But in point of fact, without giving vent to her thoughts in words, her faculties were perpetually in a fever of excitement, and nothing escaped her observation. For a long time her father never alluded by a single word to any serious subject. She attended divine worship with extreme punctuality and devotion, and with great pleasure ; in other things she showed an interest in the smallest details of all that was going on, and an almost childish minuteness in carrying out the duties of

her daily life. In short her wings had been clipped, and this is how and where we first find her.

Still, in her hours of solitude, in moments of exalted feeling, in those twilight hours of our mental perception which precede or follow sleep, and when it is apt to be keenest, Gloria heard low voices within her, as if some spirit had taken possession of her brain and was saying to her :

“You have a superior intelligence—the eyes of your mind can see it all—open them wide and look ; rouse yourself and think.”

At the time when she had read, and given her opinion on the literature and society of the ‘golden age’ Gloria was sixteen years old.

CHAPTER VII.

GLORIA'S LOVE AFFAIRS.

AT the time, however, when this story opens she was eighteen. She had not as yet had any experience of love-making or of suitors, no particular liking for any eligible youth, nor any symptoms of having parted with the smallest portion of her heart to any man living. And Don Juan did not subject her to any inquisitorial supervision, nor

prohibit her going to the theatre, out walking, or to evening gatherings under the escort of her female relatives. The overworked father rested in peace, and in implicit confidence in the perfect honesty and unimpeachable virtue of his sister-in-law, Doña Maria del Rosario.

But though the young men of Gloria's acquaintance did not arouse her to the most moderate interest, her feelings were not dormant. When only twelve years old she had lost her mother, whose place she had filled to two little brothers, one three years old and the other only fifteen months; but these both died within a few days of each other. She herself, after watching them with the greatest care during their illness, had closed their eyes and decked their little biers, laying flowers in their hands and on their breasts, and she had followed them to the grave when Caifás had carried them to the cemetery of Ficóbriga. The memory of her two innocent playfellows always held a large place in their sister's heart, and she rarely passed the rural burial-ground where their mortal remains were laid, without shedding some tears.

Besides this Gloria's heart was overflowing with transcendental and pious affection for her uncle Don Angel, Bishop of Tresestellas. She looked

upon him as a saint who had stepped down from the altar, or more properly from Heaven, to condescend to her, to give her good advice, living under the same roof and eating the same bread.

This holy man's diocese was situated in Andalucía, and he very rarely visited Madrid, but at last his feeble health compelled him to seek refreshment in his native air, and he was now accustomed to pass some weeks every summer at Ficóbriga with his brother and his niece. It was not therefore for his first visit that we have seen his arrival announced by rockets; the same ceremony had been observed two years since.

The pure and intense affection which Gloria felt for her uncle was one of those which may be classed under the head of the first law of the Decalogue. He was to her an image of God on earth. She remembered that during a severe illness she had gone through as a child her uncle had come from his distant home to see her, and that the extreme joy she had felt on seeing him seemed to bring new life and fire to her body and soul; she liked to fancy that a heavenly hand had rescued her from the dark abyss into which she had been sinking. As she got well, though she was allowed to play in the room she was not permitted to leave it, and then the Bishop, laying aside his

breviary, would take his seat close to the table on which Gloria had put out a complete set of household furniture, with diminutive chairs and tables, utensils for cooking and for service, and a dozen or two of ladies and gentlemen of the highest rank, some of which were at home, while the others were company. His reverence would discuss at length the arrangement of the seats and sofas, and the two would pass long hours in imaginary visits, paying compliments, with greetings and welcome, on behalf of the card-board performers in the improvised drama. Then came dinner-time for the residents on the table; the Bishop and the little girl were the busiest people in the world—emptying the saucepans no bigger than thimbles, skimming stewpans in which a few morsels of bread stood for fowls and turkeys, and blowing imaginary fires in cold ovens.

“Please lay the table-cloth, uncle.” “Take care there, little one; do not be so eager.” “Is the fish fried yet?” “To a turn—I quite long to eat it myself.” “Look uncle, will you wash those plates while I wipe the spoons? Make haste.” “Well, you be quick too, then.” “Now, it is all ready; walk in ladies. The music uncle, the music!”—“All right, the music is beginning, ta-ra, tan-ta-ra;” and a gentle humming, like some

hymn by Riego, or some state march, with an accompaniment of drums on the table, performed by the wooden fists of a doll, succeeded the eager chatter of the two voices, both equally childlike and clear. And in these placid dialogues, carried on in a peaceful room where the outside world could not penetrate, theological matters had no part, but from time to time the dolls would be left lying topsy-turvy, saucepans, visitors, the kitchen, the dinner-party, all forgotten; Gloria, fixing her wide eyes on her uncle's calm and beatific countenance, would ask him to tell her what Heaven was like and the angel and the saint, the equally innocent child and prelate, would talk about it with all the eagerness of exiles talking of their native land.

Long years after, when in her conversations with her father Gloria gave signs of that precocity which has been mentioned, Don Angel would laugh so heartily that it was quite a temptation to go on talking nonsense, if only to enjoy his amusement. The Bishop would vouch for his niece's orthodoxy with the utmost gravity, and on so delicate a point he never sought the opportunity for censuring her, while on the contrary, he took every occasion of praising her, and her affection for him constantly grew and increased.

And now, at last, for my story.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SUITOR.

THE rocket, as was told some pages back, had been seen to burst, and almost at the same instant the bells of the Abbey pealed out, the sharp tone of the treble mingling with the solemn booming of the *bourdon* to announce the happy event to the inhabitants of Ficóbriga. These all rushed out into the street; the boatmen and caulkers came from the shore, the laborers and shepherds left the fields, swarms of children rushed together from everywhere; all the municipal authorities appeared in full costume, and not a soul remained within doors. This enthusiastic welcome arose from the high esteem in which all the Lantiguas, and particularly Don Angel, were held in the town and neighborhood.

Now of all the important personages who came forth to greet the Bishop, the most eager and forward was Don Silvestre Romero, the chief priest or curé of the town. He was followed by a certain Don Juan Amarillo—running as fast as his little legs would carry him—a wealthy man of sallow complexion who bore his name (Amarillo

yellow or gold color), not because he was the great money-lender of the district—as in point of fact he was—but because he had inherited it from his worthy forefathers. Then came the apothecary, an intelligent and hard-working man who was on the high-road to riches; and not backward in the race, but one of the first to rush into the street—buttoning his trousers of somewhat antique cut and which he had only just put on—was Bartolomé Barabás, the radical spirit of the district, *ex-domine* with a taint of philosophy, a school-master with a touch of the politician nay of the orator and, as occasion served, of the newspaper writer. After him came several of the better class of townfolk walking with gravity and composure, for men who have passed all their lives in hard work cannot demean themselves like street-boys, or like idlers, such as Don Bartolomé. They were accompanied, as it were, by their sombreros or broad felt-hats—for on so great an occasion the sombrero must be brought out—and by their umbrellas to defy the threatening clouds.

When Don Angel reached the first houses of the town, he got out of his coach to embrace his brother and his niece, and he was greeted with a shout that sounded like the roar of a storm-beaten sea, while caps and hats waved in the air, and the

umbrellas of the upper class—those majestic personages—spread their sombre surface to ward off a few drops which fell at just the right moment. The people crowded on his Reverence to kiss his ring, and Don Angel found much difficulty in getting as far as the Abbey-church, where he paused for a few moments to pray. Then, from the Abbey to the house, the crowd was greater than ever and the interference of the municipal authorities—always watchful in all that concerned the good order of the populace—was requisite to disperse the dense multitude.

When the prelate had arrived at the house, he wished to retire to the little chapel attached to it to offer up a thanksgiving; but his brother explained to him that the ruinous state it was in rendered it unfit for use, and that the masons were employed in preparations for repairing it at once; so his Eminence conversed for a time in the down-stairs room with the dignitaries of Ficóbriga who had come up to meet him.

The house was all astir with people moving about in every direction, up stairs and down. Gloria was rushing towards the stairs to go up and give some order when she suddenly met a young man face to face; they both smiled—she with surprise, he with pleasure.

His Reverence the Bishop had brought with him three gentlemen, two of them priests and one a layman. The layman, who stands before us, was a young man of about thirty, slight, fresh-colored and well grown; his eyes were dark, but he wore light gold spectacles, over which his eyebrows curved gracefully like the arches of an antique bridge; his beard was full and yellowish, his countenance intelligent and his bearing manly, nay to a certain point elegant. His manners were easy, and his speech a little pompous, like that of a man who likes to hear himself talk and who has heard himself, a good deal, in halls of justice, in parliament or in some of the societies of the advanced and youthful spirits which exist in Madrid. He had nothing sanctimonious about him or savoring of the friar, as we might expect, from finding him in such clerical company.

This was the man who met Gloria on the bottom step of the stairs, and who seemed somewhat startled at seeing her.

"What! you here Rafael? Did you come with my uncle?" asked the young lady after the first greetings.

"I came with his Reverence, but I remained a little behind because our coach was rather slow in climbing the hill," replied the young man clasp-

ing the girl's hand. "I hear you all are well, Señor Don Juan is as young as ever, and you still as fair."

"I thought you never went out of Madrid. Things are just now in such confusion there—"

"There, and here, and on all sides! There is no knowing where people will stop. I came to Ficóbriga partly on certain election affairs and partly on an errand of my own—but Don Juan will tell you. I came in the same train as his Reverence, who at once offered me a seat in his coach and hospitality in his house. I would not accept it for fear of being in the way; besides, I had promised my intimate friend the curé to stay with him a few days."

"You will be here a long time, will you not?"

"I would gladly stay the rest of my life," said the young man with an expression of amorous softness on his grave features, and raising his eyebrows till they stood half-way up his forehead. "I saw you for the last time in Doña Maria Rosario's house. What a sly creature to abandon us to such solitude! Do you remember what we were talking about that last evening?"

Gloria began to laugh.

"Two days later I was again at my friend's

house, but the bird had flown; and Ficóbriga is always the same thing—I hate these people.”

“You hate them!” exclaimed the girl.

“Not now—no, not here,” the young man eagerly replied. “This spot is a Paradise. Unfortunately the election business will not detain me here much more than a fortnight—and how delightful it is to live here, so near to you, Gloria! It seems like a dream, and yet it is reality! To see you every day, every hour—”

“The honor is ours, Señor del Horro; but I must beg you to excuse me. I must go to order them to bring down some sweetmeats. Francisca, do you hear, Francisca!”

CHAPTER IX.

A RECEPTION, A CONVERSATION AND AN INTRODUCTION.

THE young man entered the drawing-room; there were there already the two brothers Lantigua, Doctor Lopez Sedeño, his Reverence's secretary and his page, Don Juan Amarillo, the curé, and the magistrate, three gentlemen of the town, and Don Bartolomé Barrabás who, notwithstanding his republican principles, did not hesitate to

pay a tribute of respectful homage to the man who was the glory of Ficóbriga, though this glory was clothed in the form of a prelate of the established Church. The curé of Ficóbriga, Don Silvestre Romero, was a man of great importance, with an expression at once hard and sensual, like that of a Roman emperor, and yet frank and sympathetic, and he was beginning an address—not without some embarrassment—which he had brought ready prepared, and of which History, to her shame be it said, has preserved only a few sentences.

“All the inhabitants of this humble town,” said he, “feel the liveliest satisfaction in seeing your Reverence in the midst of this humble town, and they hope that your Reverence’s presence in this humble and much-honored town may be the happy forerunner of peace, the occasion of concord, and the omen of endless happiness—” but presently he collected himself a little, and could disentangle the thoughts that lay accumulated in his mind, and he went on :

“How happy are we who live far from the scandals and intrigues of the great world, where corruption and irreligion hold their sway. What comes to our ears horrifies us. Don Juan prophesied it in his celebrated discourse on the fires of

Nineveh ; and those fires of Nineveh, which have already fallen on France, will fall too on Catholic Spain and burn her up and it shall be said of her, '*Periit memoria ejus cum sonitu.*' Religion had already cooled some time since, but now-a-days it is completely lost in most minds, and those who remain capable of guiding their souls to Heaven are persecuted and threatened by the brutal mob of philosophers and revolutionaries. The men who govern the country make a public profession of atheism, mock at the Sacred Mysteries, scoff at the Virgin Mary, disparage the character of Christ, call the saints dolls and are ready to demolish our churches and profane our altars. The ministers of religion find themselves in the most precarious condition, they are treated worse than thieves and murderers, and divine worship is conducted without splendor or even decency, in a way that is sad to contemplate, by reason of the general poverty of the Church. Men think of nothing but of saving money, and of wrangling among themselves for the upperhand in governing the country; they have ceased to be guided by a Christian policy, and as the only possible rule of government is that of Christ, they are rushing swiftly on dissolution and total ruin."

Don Silvestre, while he was speaking, never

took his eyes off Don Juan de Lantigua, as if asking him, "Am I doing it right?" But the illustrious lawyer was the only person who did not express himself enthusiastically at the close of the address, perhaps because he regarded it as neither new nor appropriate—for every occasion does not serve for the utterance of certain truths. Doctor Sedeño, also made a few brilliant remarks on the evil state of the times, but in spite of their value they have not been handed down to us.

"Yes, the times are evil," said his Reverence, addressing himself chiefly to the priest and to Barrabás who was much annoyed but did not speak a word—"and still, God will not abandon His chosen people in the midst of the storm that beats round them, nor will the ark be lacking for those who are faithful to Him. Let us pray in all sincerity, my friends! Prayer is the heaven-sent antidote against the epidemic of sin which lurks around us; let us pray for ourselves, and for those who shut their ears to the voice of God, and their eyes to the light of truth. Constant fervor and piety in the faithful few may still draw down upon earth the special favors of Heaven. *Te, Domine, custodies nos a generatione hac in æternum.*"

Having reached this point, the prelate fixed his eyes with extreme benevolence on the young lay-

man he had brought with him, and presenting him to his friends he added :

“ This is one of our heroic youths, our valiant soldiers. Gentlemen, my excellent friends, bow to the deserving champion of good principles, of religious faith, of the Catholic Church—the foe of philosophers, of atheism and of all revolutionary ribaldry. All honor to the young when they are believers—devout, full of faith and of love for the Catholic cause.”

Don Rafael del Horro bowed modestly, stammered an unintelligible protest as to the merits attributed to him.

“ As to the young men of the present day,” added the Bishop, “ they abandon themselves to free-thinking and corrupt their minds with pernicious reading, and then they aspire to the honorable title of soldiers of Christ! The Church is prepared, however, whenever it is challenged, to defend itself! Gentlemen, what I say is not mere empty compliment, but admiration for his valiant spirit, for the constancy with which he combats, pursues, and castigates materialism, both by his oratorical eloquence and his vigorous literary style, and takes up everything that has proved to be a powerful defence of the sacred cause in the period we are passing through.”

Don Juan Amarillo made a pompous bow to the young man. "We knew already," said he, "that this gentleman was a great orator and journalist."

Don Silvestre embraced Rafael del Horro with much effusion. They were old friends, and on a certain occasion when the young editor had required a good correspondent at Ficóbriga the priest had undertaken to fulfil this task, and had written certain highly-spiced letters which left nothing to be desired. While all these compliments were passing Don Bartolomé Barrabás, who was the demagogue of the place, dared not utter a word in favor of his reprobate opinions, and even when the priest and Amarillo let fall a few pungent jests at the expense of the village philosopher, he thought it prudent not to bring out the well-sharpened lances of his rhetoric. Respect for Don Angel set a seal upon his lips; and the worthy prelate rewarded his reserve, for when Don Silvestre made a direct allusion to him, saying that Ficóbriga even was tainted and had its demagogue, the Bishop replied:

"Do not attack Don Bartolomé; I hope to convert him, for his heart is in the right place, and this passing frenzy will not lose his soul, if it is taken in time."

Barrabás bowed his thanks, and for the sake

of saying something he added: "And according to the papers Don Rafael del Horro has been busy with the elections."

"Has toiled and has triumphed," said the priest smoothly. "Matters will be different now to what they were last time, when through our negligence and indifference you got the upper-hand of us." And then, pointing to Barrabás with a sweep of his right hand, he added: "Then shall they say: '*Exurgat Deus et dissipentur inimici ejus, et fugiant. . . . Sicut fluit cera a facie ignis, sic periant peccatores a facie Dei.*'"

Don Bartolomé bowed again, and said laughing: "The voting will decide."

The demagogue was not on the list of guests at dinner that day, but Don Angel begged him to stay, which greatly pleased Barrabás; and at the same moment Don Juan went to the door and called out:

"Gloria, Gloria, my child; are we to have no dinner to-day?"

CHAPTER X.

DON ANGEL, BISHOP OF TRESESTRELLAS.

THE Bishop was just a grown-up child. His plump and rosy features with their constant gentle smile were framed, as it were, between his flowing episcopal robes and the brim of his green sombrero, radiant of spiritual joy, benevolence, perfect peace of conscience and a happy frame of mind towards God and man. He was one of those men who, by the simple impulse of a healthy nature, are prepared to take good for granted in all that surrounds them. His studies, and his experience in the confessional had taught him that there was wickedness in the world; still, whenever he had been talking to any one, he would always say: "What a good soul! What an excellent fellow!"

Just as a lamp throws its light on all that come near it his warm bright spirit radiated goodness on to all who approached him. He was incapable of harboring an evil thought of any one whom he knew, and when he heard of the iniquities of those whom he did not know, he never failed to say something in defence of the absent.

His intellect was perhaps inferior to that of his brother Don Juan, who was in fact a remarkable man; but he was his superior in genuine piety and sweetness of character; and even with regard to matters of dogma he held the doctrine of intolerance of error in its purely theological sense and not in the vulgar acceptation of that misused word; his keen compassion for all the failings and shortcomings of humanity seemed to temper the severity of his opinions. What Don Angel might have done if he could have held in the hollow of his hand the whole mass of modern society with its vices and heresies, it is impossible to say; as to Don Juan, it is quite certain that he would have flung it unhesitatingly into the fire and have enjoyed afterwards a perfectly quiet conscience—indeed a sense of satisfaction at having done a good deed.

In his religious practice Don Angel was impeccable; impossible to accuse him either of indifference or of excess of zeal. He never flagged in his duties as a Catholic, never let himself be led away by extravagant subtleties, or elaborate symbolism. In his hours of leisure he refreshed his mind by pious reading and eschewed newspapers of whatever party. At Ficóbriga, as his medical advisers recommended a quiet life and that he

should avoid reading and mental effort, he loved to walk in the garden, looking at the variety of fine flowers, and learning from his niece the time and conditions of their growth and blossoming. He liked too, to walk through the town and down to the sea, frequently walking on the shore or the quays, where he would linger to watch the fishermen's boats come in; and their return to harbor always filled him with an ineffable sentiment of delight and wonder at the infinite goodness of God. His eyes would detect them far on the horizon, follow them across the sea, and when they had come to land, he took particular pleasure in seeing them unload their cargo of sardines, haddock and sea-bream. He was always equally astonished at their having caught so many fishes, and would say to the boatmen: "I should have thought there could be none left after all you caught yesterday. Blessed be the Lord who will not leave the poor to perish!"

He was fond of music, be it what it might, making no distinction of school or style. Good and bad music had no meaning for him; to him it was all good, and whenever Gloria played the piano he listened with delight and even with a vague respect, for the rapid excursions of her fingers over the notes seemed to him the height of

human dexterity. The rhythm would take possession of his ear, and in the morning as he wandered about the garden, after having said mass in the Abbey church or in the house chapel when it was repaired, he would hum some tuneless air between his teeth much to his own satisfaction. But his chief pleasure was in discussing with his niece some definite subject, sacred or profane. He would authorize her kindly to say whatever occurred to her, question her concerning a thousand trifles which could have no real interest for him, and comment on the various events that occurred in Ficóbriga—for events do occur even in Ficóbriga.

He held his secretary, the reverend Doctor Lopez Sedeño, in such high esteem that he never set hand to any serious matter without consulting him, for Sedeño was an eminent theologian and very learned in canon law; still, from time to time the secretary had shown himself too much devoted to political affairs, reading the papers with eager attention, and even writing for them to some small extent. Though Don Angel was averse to this in principle, he had soon grown used to it, and ended by approving it, declaring that the times required all to bear arms who could. There were indeed certain malicious persons in the anterooms of the episcopal palace who grumbled—in whispers—at

the unbounded influence of Doctor Sedeño in his Reverence's council chamber, and there were some who dubbed this faithful friend and servant '*le petit Antonelli*.' But we need not trouble ourselves with these petty individuals—who may indeed have been maligned. It was said too, that Sedeño was ambitious and haughty, and aspired himself to the See of Tresestellas when Don Angel should be translated—as was rumored—to a more important one, and receive the Cardinal's hat. Of all this we know nothing, and we will shut our ears to the squabbles of the chapter.

It is certain that Don Angel was absolutely adored by the priests of his diocese and by his fellow-natives of Ficóbriga; that his soul was free from ambition, and that if the perversity of the times occasioned him much trouble it was only from the spiritual point of view. He was very much attached to Rafael del Horro, that young knight of the Church—as a sort of lay apostle—an energetic defender of catholicism and of the rights of the ecclesiastical body. Nevertheless, when, in the train, the excited and eager young fellow had been talking of the business of the election, his Reverence had replied:

“I believe that my fellow-townsmen will vote for you, because they are good Catholics and will

support the defenders of the Church, still do not ask me to speak to them on the subject. Come to an understanding with their friend Don Silvestre, who is said to be a master-mind in this matter of elections; those that he has managed have been famous throughout the country."

On this point not even Doctor Sedeño—for all that he was *le petit Antonelli*—could shake the immovable determination of his Lordship the Bishop. However, he did interfere in another small matter of business which had brought Don Rafael to Ficóbriga, recommending him without hesitation to the care and regard of his brother Don Juan.

CHAPTER XI.

A SERIOUS BUSINESS.

RAFAEL DEL HORRO lived with his friend the curé, and every day either at breakfast or at dinner, he presented himself at Lantigua's house, attracted by the desire of talking to Gloria.

One morning, before this valiant champion of the faith had made his appearance, Don Angel who, with Gloria had just returned from the Abbey

where he had been celebrating mass, said to his niece:

“Your father is in the garden and wishes to speak to you—go to him.”

Gloria ran down to the garden, where she found Don Juan standing with his hands behind his back, inspecting the building materials which had been brought for repairing the chapel. They went together to a seat in a side walk shaded by thick magnolias and other trees. The low sun warmed the air and brought into the garden the whole convocation of the republic of birds from the immediate neighborhood, popping in and out on every side with much chirping and bustle. Don Juan looked affectionately at his daughter and began:

“It is out of my tender love for you my child that I want to inform you of a matter which seriously affects your future life and happiness. If I had to deal with a young girl devoid of that sound judgment and good sense which characterizes you, my course would at once be clear; but you are not one of those, and I prefer the plainest and shortest words. I think my child that a good opportunity offers for your marrying.”

Gloria sat in silent amazement; she wished to speak but could think of nothing important enough

to be said on so critical an occasion, or worthy of the impressive and majestic demeanor of Don Juan, in-whose person she then felt the united presence of her father and her uncle.

“Yes,” he went on, “an affair which with some women is one of much difficulty, is in this instance a very simple problem that can be easily solved to the credit and satisfaction of all concerned. A young girl who has not spent her early years in improper intrigues or silly flirtations over balconies and in drawing-rooms, is the pride and treasure of a respectable family. You are such a young girl. Your amiable and docile temper, your truly christian education and modest manners, your ideas which, though they were at one time too ambitious and bold, you have since brought under the yoke of authority—all move me to address you in this manner, with the certainty that your views will agree with mine and that you will feel as I feel.”

Again Gloria longed to say something though without expressing her full agreement; but nothing would come into her head that was at all adequate to the gravity of the occasion, so she thought it prudent to hold her tongue.

“How grave you look!” continued her father, “and how pale. Well, I would rather see you so. A bold and frivolous girl would have smiled and

have said a dozen stupid or foolish things, while you understand that the matter is serious—a pious union for life, a sacrament instituted by God, and altogether the most difficult and delicate step in life; why the mere idea of putting out her foot to take it is enough to plunge the soul of a religious woman in the deepest reflection.” He smiled and then went on: “No doubt you already suspect who the man must be whom I consider best fitted to be your husband. There is a young man whose character, whose remarkable talents, and truly christian temper, make him a brilliant exception among the other men of his class and age, as you are an exception among the girls of the present day; and this young man—need I name him? is Don Rafael del Horro. In fact, if he were not as conspicuous for his virtue as for his talents, he would have addressed himself to you, and have turned your head with nonsensical speeches out of novels opposed to all christian doctrine, and which even where their purpose is good cannot fail to sow the seeds of vice and immorality in the soul. Judicious, sensible, virtuous and respectful, alike to you and to us, he has refrained from all impassioned demonstrations. Both in Madrid and here he has confided to me, that he feels for you a pure and holy devotion, and that he shall esteem him-

self happy if you allow him to bear the name of your husband."

Gloria, more incapable than ever of uttering a single word, was tracing horizontal lines on the ground with the point of her parasol.

"If there were any need my dear to enumerate Rafael's merits," continued Don Juan, "I might tell you that of all the men I know there is not one who charms me more by the soundness of his opinions, the enthusiasm with which he has dedicated his youth to the defence of a cause which the evil-minded are always ready to persecute, by his honorable industry and punctuality—all of them qualities which rarely adorn one so young but rather men of discreet and mature age, who have learnt the ways of the world through the labor of years." Gloria, having finished drawing horizontal lines on the ground, was now adding perpendicular lines forming chequers with the first.

"During the last few weeks Rafael has acquired the esteem and gratitude of all of us who had suffered persecution. His talents and his courage in resisting, single-handed, all the enemies and persecutors of the Church have reminded me of Judas Maccabeus, but that he fought with the sword and Rafael with the tongue and pen. What a series of triumphs does the Church owe to him

in its temporal affairs! what eternal gratitude he deserves from the poor and persecuted priests who could not go into the dens of heresy to defend themselves nor allow the cathedral to become a scene of blasphemies. Still, as truth needs a voice in every sphere, in that of this lower world of strife the Church has a good many pious journals to defend and protect her, and make a firm rampart against the threats of the impious."

"A mob of rascals!" said Gloria, who seeing here at last an opening for saying something, would not miss the opportunity.

"Sometimes their hearts are not so black as their words," said Don Juan. "Nevertheless Rafael has treated them as they deserve.—Poor young man! when he confessed to me, most respectfully, the chaste devotion that you have inspired him with I was greatly rejoiced. 'Since my daughter has no idea of being a nun'—said I—'in you she may find her companion for life,' but I did not choose to answer him till I knew what you thought about the matter."

But Gloria still traced bars in the dust.

"My notions on the matter, my child, are that marriage should only follow a free choice of the heart, subject to the advice of older persons. Still, though I allow for such advice and in some cases

even for due opposition to an unsuitable affection on a young girl's part, I altogether disallow all violence or constraint in order that a father's choice—sometimes a very doubtful one—may be successful. This must always be the cause of an unhappy and immoral union. If after duly considering Rafael's rare good qualities you feel no inclination to marry him, I shall neither persuade nor coerce you. If you have never thought much about him and are indifferent—which I believe to be the case—a suitable delay will reveal to you the treasures of his good and honest heart. Do not mistake the vehement raptures of a day for that calm devotion which will last through a lifetime, a reflected light from that pure and trustful love we feel towards God."

Gloria finished off the pattern she had traced, adding little arrow-heads at the four corners; then raising her eyes from the elaborate geometrical design to her father's face, she said timidly.

"Very well, papa, I will always do just as you bid me."

"But if I bid you nothing!" exclaimed Lantigua hastily. "I see you are not prepared to give me a final and categorical answer. That is a proof of good feeling and good sense. Such things require consideration."

"Yes, consideration," exclaimed Gloria, clutching at the idea as a shipwrecked man clings to a plank.

"Very well," said Don Juan rising. "Take as much time as you like for consideration, my child. You have good sense, feeling, piety and faith enough to bring you to a fitting decision. We will pause there?"

"Yes, wait a little."

"Still, I should wish you not to delay your decision too long."

"I will decide soon."

"I will give you three days—come, four. This shows me, as I said before, that you are not used to having a lover. Has Rafael said anything to you?"

"A little—but only in jest—I have always taken it as a jest."

"This time it is in good earnest; so now my little girl prepare your answer. Consider it well. Neither your consent nor your refusal can diminish your father's fondness.—Good-bye for the present, I have work to do. I only charge you, as usual, take care that there is no noise to disturb me."

"Be easy on that point, papa."

Don Juan shut himself into his room and sank into the ocean of his books as a diver plunges into

the sea. Till dinner-time, his very existence was to be ignored.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OTHER ONE.

DON JUAN'S discourse had left Gloria in the greatest perplexity. The subject was in truth a grave one, and it could not be put before her in this way without seriously occupying her mind. For a long time her reflections were so absorbing that she lost all sense of the flight of the hours. At last, with a deep sigh, she raised her head, as if she could not come to a decision. The garden was perfectly empty and still, and the heat of the sun, which now stood high in the heavens, had increased considerably. All the shutters were closed in the house, and not a sound was to be heard in it; the very birds were silent, excepting where two or three were twittering their secrets or settling some dispute in the topmost boughs of the plane-trees.

Gloria rose, for the painful excitation of her nerves prompted her to walk while she thought. Soothed by the silence and solitude around her,

she went towards a pretty and sequestered arbor; the rapidity of her walk and the anxiety with which, as she approached the sheltered spot, she glanced round at the thickness of the shrubs might have made a spectator fancy that some one awaited her there—but there was no one; the copse was wholly deserted. Then she went up to the boundary hedge and looked out into the road through the spaces left by the tangled foliage of the honeysuckle; her eyes were fixed, her face pale and her long eyelashes fluttered and trembled like butterflies playing in the light. Any one who could have seen her in this attitude and noted the interest with which her eyes explored the road, first downwards towards the sea and then up towards the mountains, must have fancied she was watching for some one. Nevertheless, I am in a position to swear—and I swear it—no one was coming; no one ever had come who had the smallest hold upon her heart.

Presently she went up to her room and sat down to some needle-work. She continued to think, but the slightest sounds made her start and turn her head. The whisper of a falling leaf, the steps of the gardener on the gravel, the clatter of the empty watering-pots as they were set down, the water as it splashed in the basin full of gold-

fish, the cooing of the doves at the top of the loft of the old house, the distant whistle of a steam-boat starting from the quay—all struck her ear and vibrated in her brain as keenly as though they had been beloved voices calling to her by her name in so many distinct spots of infinite space. And yet no one called; neither from the garden, nor from the empty air above, nor from the sea below, nor was there even a voice heard by her ear alone. Her heart beat violently to a rapid rhythm—foot-steps seemed to echo to its throbbing.

Gloria de Lantigua was in a singular state of mind. Her reason had nothing to object to her father's project, and was ready and free to recognize in Rafael all the qualities of a young man of sound sense, of an honorable and amiable character, of a champion of catholicism, of an indefatigable worker, a secular apostle. Acknowledging all this, she made every effort to discover in her bosom some strong liking for the man himself; but what enhanced the difficulty was that an intrusive shade would persistently come between him and her fancy—a shade rising from she knew not whence. This would seem to point to the inference that the young lady had already met with the choice of her heart; but a long course of inquiries, carried on with the assistance of the most inquisitive of her

neighbors in Ficóbriga, prove the contrary. Teresita la Monja, Don Juan de Amarillo's wife, in whose house there was a little window from which her sharp eyes could command and rake the garden, court-yards and alleys of the Lantiguas' house, declares that if Gloria had ever received a lover no bigger than a bean, or had a letter, or talked over the balcony, it could not have escaped her knowledge. And witness to the same effect is borne by the two daughters of Don Bartolomé, who were both well-informed persons as to the news of the town and on intimate terms with Francisca Pedrezuela, our heroine's worthy housekeeper.

And yet *the other one* must be somewhere; but where? Who was he?

Very late after dinner Gloria went alone down into the garden, and as she walked she spoke—without moving her lips it is true—she spoke for us and we will listen.

“It is folly,” she said. “Madness that possesses me; madness to think of a man who does not exist, to let my head be turned and my heart ache for an imaginary person. Away with such nonsense, vain illusions and mute dialogues. I am perhaps not quite well, and my brain is gone wrong no doubt. I am living in a delusion, dreaming of impossibilities, of a being who neither exists nor

ever can exist on earth. How else can it be that, of all the men I have seen and heard and known, not one resembles him? Ah! and if my father or my uncle knew him they would not speak in such praise of Don Rafael.

“But how should they know him if he does not exist, if he is nowhere to be found, if he has neither bodily substance, life, nor reality? I am mad, utterly mad. Leave me—you—and never return. Be silent—you—and speak to me no more for I will not hear. It was a lie—less substantial than a shade, than a dream, than a sunbeam! a fancy and nothing more. Not only do you not exist, you never could exist for you would be perfection. Go, leave this garden and never return; never speak to me, never call me in the silence of the night, never pass by rustling the dry and withered autumn leaves where they lie.—Farewell—you! You have been courteous to me, full of delicacy and generosity, loyal, passionate without insulting me, and loving though treating me with sacred respect;—and yet I must drive you away for my father desires me to love this Don Rafael—an excellent fellow, a worthy young man, as he says. No doubt there is no better to be found in this world, and to believe in you, and dream of you is as wild as it would be to raise my hand to pluck at a star.

“ Well ! everything has its proper sphere. In heaven are the sun and the stars, and on earth men and worms.—Let us be content to crawl and not to soar. My father has told me again and again that if I do not clip the wings of my fancy I shall come to misfortune. Out with the scissors. I must either resist or yield—live in the world of reality or the world of dreams. My dear father and master, you are right to lead me into this road ; guided by so faithful a hand I will enter on it with confidence and marry this true soldier of Christ.”

Presently she went on to remember that when a school-girl is condemned to bread and water for not knowing her lessons it becomes a necessity to amuse herself in her solitude with foolish fancies, her mind fixed on imaginary lovers and impassioned scenes beautified by innocent fancy. She told herself that such follies were unworthy of a person of such serious character and principles as herself, and though her unspotted conscience, clear and translucent as the sky above her, showed her no tinge of impropriety, it told her that in these constant aberrations of fancy there was no small taint of sin, or at least of temptation. Then she laughed at herself, and once more fixing her thoughts upon her father, she felt so touched by his kindness, his foresight, his upright judgment,

that it increased the admiration and love she already felt for him; and then, by a natural concatenation, her thoughts after all these extravagant wanderings returned to the person of Don Rafael.

“What a thoroughly good fellow he is!” she said as she went towards the house. “I was a fool not to perceive his merits sooner. He might be taken for a much older man; and then what talents Heaven has bestowed on him. He thinks nothing of turning the tables on all the abominable revolutionaries and demolishing them with his arguments. And what powers of language! I remember well a speech in which he said: ‘You are trampling under foot all laws human and divine! You are insulting the Deity!’ And then he is pious, he is religious, he does not share that spirit of free-thought which disgraces the young men of the present day—ah!—I hear him coming—I must fly.”

And she hastily escaped through one door while the model young man entered by another.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT RAINS.

THIS revulsion of feeling did not last long in Gloria. Just as the electric current courses through the globe her ideas could not avoid their determined path.

"No," she said, "no, I cannot care for that man. There is something in him that repels me without my knowing what."

That evening, being the 23rd of June, St. John's eve, they all went to the Abbey. Don Angel went over every part of it, to see the repairs done to some of the altars, some new dresses which had been dedicated to the use of the Virgin, and the ornaments of silver recently purchased by subscription, by the faithful of Ficóbriga. He examined it all carefully and pronounced his opinion on each piece with much acumen. After a short prayer they went out for a walk. In the porch his Reverence said:

"We will go down to the sea-shore if it is agreeable to you all."

Don Juan, Sedeño, Rafael and the parish priest agreed with much pleasure.

"We shall see the boats come in," said the curé, screening his eyes with his hand to look out to sea. "There will be a good haul of sardines to-day; hallo! but the sea is very rough!"

"Shall we have a storm?" asked Don Angel.

The Priest looked round at the sky and the horizon, and seemed to sniff the air while studying the face of the weather.

"We shall have a storm this evening," he said throwing back his long priest's cloak, a garment which he found most inconvenient, though he could do no less than wear it in the society of the Bishop.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed the prelate in mock dismay. "Gentlemen will you continue your walk in a deluge?"

"Don Silvestre," said Don Juan, "is more weather-wise than the best barometer ever constructed."

Romero pointed to the north-east where a flattish hill sloped down to the sea, known as la Cotera de Fronilde.

"That is an infallible sign," he said. "The hill is capped with red clouds and the proverb never fails which says: '*Fronilde frowns and Ficóbriga drowns.*'"

"Still the sun is very hot," observed the Bishop.

“Another sign that it will rain soon, my Lord.”

“Well let us decide—shall we or shall we not go down to the shore?”

“What is there to fear?” said Don Juan. “Are you coming Gloria?”

His daughter, during these meteorological observations, had found herself obliged to answer various questions put by young del Horro and to listen to the studied phrases which concealed, under the guise of small talk, a distinct purpose of love-making.

“Are you coming Gloria?” repeated Don Juan.

“No,” said the girl, “I wish to pray and I am going back into the church.” Rafael’s face darkened like the cloud-capped hill.

“I will grant you a dispensation from that duty for this evening,” said Sedeño politely and with a certain air of gallantry.

“No, no, let her go, let her say her prayers!” said Don Angel.—“Don Rafael oblige me with your arm.”

Gloria went back into the Abbey and the rest set out on their walk across a stony common which extended from the back of the church down to the sea-shore; Don Angel walking in front and leaning on the young orator and journalist—an

image of the Church supported by youthful valor and enthusiasm.

Beyond this green slope the sea lay spread before them; two or three smacks were scudding across it towards the bar, their white sails set like wings, and far, very far away, on the very ocean's rim where sea and sky met, a black streak darkened the intense blue.

"A steam-boat," remarked the Bishop.

"It is only passing at a distance," said Romero.

As he spoke the sun vanished behind a cloud and left them in comparative gloom.

"It would seem that our reverend friend's prophecy is about to be fulfilled, here at any rate," said Don Angel. "We are left without any sunshine though it is clear out there. It will blow over."

"We shall have rain," said the walking barometer.

Don Angel looked up to the sky, and as he looked a drop of water fell on the tip of his nose. Don Juan put out his hand and exclaimed: "Drops are falling."

"There it is already," said Don Angel also extending his hand. "We shall do best to go on and return home round by the custom-house. The distance is almost the same."

“Then let us get on!” said Don Silvestre opening his red umbrella and giving it to Rafael to hold over his lordship the Bishop. Don Juan also opened his; the drops fell faster. Suddenly a squall from the north-east swept violently down upon them, raising whirling columns of dust, for the soil was scarcely damp, and facing the party with such force as to oblige them to stop for a moment; the flowing robes of the Bishop, the priest and the secretary were dragged flapping round their persons as though the Wind wanted to snatch them away for his own use.

“Good Heavens! what is happening?” exclaimed the Bishop.

In a very few seconds the dark cloud had covered the whole face of the sky; the old poplars with their scaly trunks and rustling leaves, bowed and moaned, flinging their arms about with gestures of despair. The gale, after sweeping over all the roofs and tearing off every tile that was loose, flung itself with mad fury on the sea, it fretted the waves into deep hollows, roared through the tumbling cylinders and lashed away sheets of foam. The horizon had become invisible; sea, earth and sky were a vast blank of water and mist. Suddenly, a swift snake-like streak of blue fire flashed across space with a sharp quiver, as

some keen thought flashes through the brain, and then, far above them and yet close by, came the deep roar as of a thousand hills falling and crashing into ruin. The rain fell in torrents, a dense, thrashing down-pour, and they were wet to the skin in an instant; but Don Angel, turning to his friends only said with a voice and look of deep compassion: "The poor fishermen! The poor sailors?"

CHAPTER XIV.

'THE OTHER' IS AT HAND.

GLORIA had gone into the church again, well pleased to find herself alone and in a spot so fitted for giving the reins to her imagination. There were not more than five or six persons in the sacred building, among them Teresita la Monja, who was the last to leave, and two old sailors who came there every evening. Gloria went to the family chapel of the Lantiguas and seated herself in a corner where she could fix her eyes on the altar. The still atmosphere, the subdued light, and the silence seemed to her like an untroubled lake in whose depths her mind's eye could see her

soul reflected. It was a good opportunity for prayer, for seeing God face to face, and lifting up her thoughts to Him, for leaving in the sanctuary all of her trouble that could be left;—so thought Gloria.

In the church at Ficóbriga the chairs are very low with high backs serving the devout as a "*prie-dieu*." Gloria took one of these, and kneeling upon it, bent her face on the back, supporting her forehead with both hands; and then she indulged in meditation.

"Why can I not tear out this thing and fling it from me? My God! why is it that this presence—which is empty air, which has no existence, which never can exist—should fill my mind night and day to torment me and tempt me every hour? I will pray—I will pray with all my might." And she began to pray with her lips. Still her thoughts would not go whither her will commanded them, and as the compass points ever to the north, so her mind dwelt on the thing she fancied. No human power could divert it.

"It is madness, it is madness!" murmured the girl, raising her head.

She shut her eyes and covered her face, and a voice inside her seemed to say: "I see you! you are there—I can touch you!" The poor child

was seized with a sense of breathless anticipation that was perfect anguish; her heart seemed to expand and contract at every pulsation; there, in the very depths of her being, lurked a sense of revelation, of obscure prevision which she could not account for. She seemed to hear footsteps; but with the ears of her spirit, as if some mysterious gift of divination assured her of the approach of some one of paramount interest to herself. She seemed to see a gleam which gradually dawned through the increasing darkness, announcing the advent of some glorious light; while a solemn voice seemed to whisper within: "My soul—it will soon be day!" Suddenly she opened her eyes and was struck with alarm. She glanced at the arched vaults above her and saw how dark it was, though not more than five o'clock. The original stone-work of the old church, a Romanesque structure of the XII century, had been profanely disfigured by a coating of plaster under which emblematic figures on the capitals and in the niches were almost invisible; they seemed to have shrunk with cold, all wrapped in coarse white grave-clothes. Many of the arches had, in the course of so many long years, lost their original curve and the sharpness of their mouldings; many battered windows made wry faces, many columns had

ceased to be vertical and seemed to be bowing to each other with ceremonious solemnity; the whole aspect of the place impressed the spectator as sad and forlorn.

Gloria, overcome by sudden terror, rose hastily from her knees; at that moment a terrific blow was dealt as it seemed on the roof above her, and the whole building struggled and trembled in the violent clutch of the gale, which did its utmost to tear it from its foundations. Furious gusts burst in at the open arches and swept through the aisles with a terrible trumpet blast, searching the whole church, overturning the benches, whisking the dust off the altars and disarranging the gorgeous vestments of the saints. A lamp was flung down and in its fall broke a glass case or sepulchre containing a figure of the dead Christ. A long branch of artificial flowers lashed the face of St. John, and the sword was wrenched from St. Michael's hand, and tossed into a confessional. The gale howled round the organ, rousing an echo from its pipes, and rapidly turned over the leaves of the book on the desk, as with the fevered hand of an invisible reader. It roughly kissed Gloria on the forehead and then escaped through the doors, slamming them with such violence that they lost half of their worm-eaten panels.

Gloria was now quite terrified, for the church was in total darkness and not a living soul remained in it. As she came out of the side chapel, she fancied she heard steps—she began to run, and some one ran behind her. Certainly she heard a footstep and a voice saying: "Wait—it is I—I have come!"

Her panic increased, and with it her desire to fly; she went from one chapel to another, and was on the point of shrieking out for help. The very altar pieces looked as if they were moving and she could fancy the saints were calling to each other!

At last she was able to control herself; she tried to be calm, and made herself look behind the pillars and on all sides with a resolute attention which soon dispelled her absurd fancies. Still she could not completely recover her presence of mind; and her heart shrunk and shivered within her like a sensitive plant when it is touched. Gloria felt as if an invisible hand was laid upon it.

"How nervous I am!" she said to herself, trying to shake off her alarm.

At this moment she heard the merry voice of a child, and out of the door of the sacristy there came running towards her one of the sacristan's little boys.

"Sildo, Sildo," she called, "Come here."

"What you! Señorita," exclaimed the child going up to her.

"Come here—give me your hand."

"I am going to bolt the doors for such a wind has got up.—Do you wish to go out?"

"No, it seems to be raining too hard. I will wait in the sacristy." Sildo led her thither.

CHAPTER XV.

HE IS COMING.

"Is your father there?"

"Yes Señorita; he is fixing a board to mend the paupers' bier."

Gloria entered the sacristy which was gloomy and damp, and crossed a strip of court-yard covered with grass; from this she stepped into a tumble-down dwelling, with no less than three stories, while the walls showed the mangled remains of a Byzantine arch all daubed over with plaster; it was in fact patched up out of the ruins of the old abbot's palace and served as a residence for the parish sexton. The room she entered was full of a medley of things in disorderly heaps. It was at once the warehouse, the carpen-

ter's shop, the living-room and bedroom of Caifás and his children. Tall candlesticks made of wood, silvered over and covered with the guttering of yellow wax-candles, stuck up, like legs in the air, above a black mass of funeral gear. A figure of Saint Peter, without any hands—and consequently without his keys—lifted his bald head, crowned with the gilt nimbus, from a heap of shavings and laths. Painted canvases, like the curtain of a theatre, or fragments of church decorations for Holy-week, were nailed up to a beam to serve as a screen to that part of the room in which the three children slept, and the wooden frame of an old cupboard without a back contained some cracked pipkins, broken jars and a skull and a book carved in wood, formerly the property of the image of some holy anchorite. There was no chair nor other article of furniture of any description intended for sitting on, unless the carpenter's bench might serve the purpose. When Gloria went in, Caifás was hammering at the black boards of the paupers' bier, fitting a piece into the bottom of it. At each blow the hideous structure, which lay bottom upwards, seemed to give a groan.

“What a terrific storm!” said Gloria as she came into the workshop.

“Señorita Gloria!” exclaimed Caifás, grinning

sigh that might have filled the Abbey; then huddling himself up again he said:

“Patient! aye! is there any patience left in the world I wonder! I thought I had pretty well used up the whole stock. Indeed, if it were not for a few charitable souls like you Señorita, what would become of me and my poor children?”

Mundideo's three little ones seemed to confirm their father's assertion, and stood contemplating the young lady with a fixed, adoring stare. They were two boys and a scrap of a girl; she, absorbed in admiration of the Señorita, was gradually edging closer to her, and with her grubby little pink fingers—like rose-leaves grimed with mud—she softly touched Gloria's gloves and the edge of her mantle, and would have extended her investigations but that her feeling of reverence checked her. Sildo, the eldest wiped away the dust from the seat Gloria occupied and from everything near her, while Paco, the second, tried to arrange in perfect order the threads in the tassel of her parasol which hung within his reach.

Gloria pulled out her purse; “I have given you nothing this week,” she said; “here.”

“Blessed be the hand of God!” cried José, taking six little silver coins which she held out to him. “You see children, God does not forsake us.

Ah, it is a mercy that every one is not so stony-hearted as his reverence Don Silvestre."

"Why—what does he say?"

"Señorita Gloria," answered Caifás wiping away a tear with the sleeve of his coat. "After the first of the next month I shall no longer eat the bitter bread I earn from the parish. His reverence the curé is turning me off."

"Turning you off?"

"Yes; he says he is turning me away for my disgraceful conduct—because I have many debts and cannot pay them—because I am a swindler and a villain, and a miserable wretch—and he is right. I am not fit to have to do with these sacred places. I am a swindler, I am eaten up with debt, I have pawned everything but the shirt I have on and I owe Don Juan Amarillo more than my weight in silver—I shall soon go to prison and then before the judge and then to the gallows, which is all I am fit for."

"Good Heaven! José, you frighten me!" cried Gloria trying to soothe the children who, seeing their father cry, had begun to do the same. "If all you say is true you must be a very wicked man."

"I am nothing more than stupid, ugly Caifás—Caifás the idiot as they call me—Caifás the unfortunate as I call myself."

“Francisca told me yesterday that on Sunday you were drunk.”

“Yes, Señorita—it is true. I got drunk—how can I explain to you, you will not understand; I doubted whether I should throw myself into the sea, or get drunk to sleep a few hours—to forget that I was Caifás and a horror to every one. Wine makes you jolly or it makes you sleepy. Dreams or jollity—both seem equally heavenly to a man who knows nothing of either.”

“Nay, nay—do not try to excuse yourself,” said Gloria in a tone of gentle admonition. “You are not good; I do not believe you are as wicked as you make out, but you are not good. The truth is that you have a horridly bad house and that your wife is enough to make a saint go wrong.”

“Oh my God! oh Holy Virgin!—oh Señorita!” said the poor wretch, in a tone that betrayed the fact that she had hit on the wound that rankled. “How on earth can I be good with that woman at my side? If only you could see her when she comes in at night, with her heart as foul as her face and her face as hard as her heart; all painted with red, and looking for all the world as if the devil had turned her out of doors! Down on the quays they think her a beauty and give

her drink, so she comes in jolly enough; then she beats me, takes my money, thrashes the children, scolds and screams or sings songs which are a scandal to the curé and all the neighbors. She is at the bottom of all my troubles—of my having not a chair to sit on, of all my clothes and furniture and bedding being in pawn, of my never having a réal, of my being on the point of being brought up before the judge by Don Juan Amarillo, and turned out of my place by his reverence. This is the state I am in—I Caifás, abandoned by God, and on the high-road to hell for that woman's sins."

"You are an idiot"—said Gloria much provoked. "Why do you let yourself be tyrannized over by such a harpy?"

"I don't let myself be tyrannized over. At night we quarrel and I beat her. Still, even your wishing it will not help me to get out of the misery she has got me into. As I cannot pay my debts I shall be turned out of the sacristan's place, I shall have to beg and to go to prison. Nay, Señorita, I am afraid that this poor wretched Caifás cannot live much longer. I have a great mind to fling myself into the sea.—It must be very peaceful down there, quite at the bottom!"

"Miserable man!" exclaimed Gloria much

moved, "we will protect you. Do not doubt the goodness of God, José; do not think of suicide which is the worst sin of all; just you trust in God."

"When you tell me to trust, I feel I can almost do so. When I look at you, I feel as if evil were drawn out of me—and I am stronger to bear misfortune—God must have been very great when he made you Señorita Gloria. My life is as black and dingy as that coffin; then you come in; you only look at me and I could believe that flowers were springing from that bier. Yes, dear lady, when you are by I am another creature. I could worship you as a heavenly being that has helped me so often, so many, many times—who cured me when I was ill last year, who would not leave my children naked, who condescended to comfort me, honoring my wretched hovel with her presence—the only soul that has ever said to me 'Caifás you are not so bad as they say. Trust in God and have patience.'"

"You are mad!" said Gloria. "What does all this mean?"

"It means that you are an angel. Oh! if ever I find an opportunity of showing my gratitude. But what can I ever do? I am like a stone in the roadway, everyone treads me under foot."

"Come, come, do not think so much of my kindness which amounts to nothing," said Gloria impatiently, and she glanced at the sky to see if it still were raining.

"Do not think of it? And am I not to think of the hand that gives me my daily bread? You are never out of my thoughts one single hour; I believe that I should forget myself and the salvation of my soul before forgetting you—my guardian angel. I feel as if you were my protecting saint, and I see you everywhere. Last night, Señorita, I dreamed of you."

"Of me?" said Gloria smiling. "And what did you dream?"

"Something sad, yes very sad."

"That I died?"

"Oh! no—but that you had forgotten me and my poor children, and cared no more about us."

"That is strange. And what had made me forget you?"

"You were in love." Gloria looked grave and colored slightly. "Yes—I dreamed a man had come."

"A man?"

"Why, of course. Who should you fall in love with but a man? Yes—I saw him, and I see him still."

“And what was he like?” said Gloria laughing.

“He was—how shall I describe him?—a dreadful, terrible man—”

“Good gracious!”

“No—you must understand; not horrible to look at—on the contrary very handsome—his face was only to be compared with that of our Lord Jesus.”

“Why then did he terrify you?” asked Gloria, giving more attention to this foolish matter than she felt that it deserved.

“Because he took you away, far, very far away,” said Caifás with all the emphasis of a narrator fully possessed by his subject.

“Caifás do not frighten me with these terrible and valiant lovers who carry me so far away. Stick to the simple fact.”

“Well, I dreamed he came flying through the air and that he fell from the clouds like a thunderbolt.”

“Come, come, that will do!” said Gloria. “You will make me as nervous as I was before with your rhodomontade. I was dreadfully nervous in the church this evening; José I was horribly frightened.”

Gloria rose as she spoke. “Do you know,”

she went on after looking out of doors "that the storm is as bad as ever. It is very strange that my father should not have sent any one to fetch me."

"It is strange," Caifás agreed. "Would you like me to go to tell them where you are, Señorita?"

"No, some one is sure to come. Papa means to send the carriage—but no; I remember that one of the mules was taken ill yesterday—but at any rate Roque should have come with an umbrella."

"I have a broken one;" said Mundideo, "still it would cover you. Would you like to go Señorita?"

"I will wait a little longer. I think they must come."

Some time passed and Gloria grew impatient.

"I am really getting anxious," she said. "It is almost night and no one has come to look for me. Something must have happened at home I am afraid."

"Would you like to go at once? We can get there and I think it rains rather less."

"Yes, the storm is giving way. Let us go at once and take advantage of this lull. What a state the streets are in!"

"It is not far."

Caifás brought out, from behind Saint Peter, a red umbrella and opened it in the room to see

what state it was in. It was certainly not in an encouraging condition for use in stormy weather ; the stuff had started away from the points of the ribs leaving them bare, and the unsewn gores flapped forlornly between them like the petals of a faded flower.

CHAPTER XVI.

HE IS COME.

“ THAT will do,” said Gloria eagerly. “ Let us be off.”

After giving the children all the small coin she had about her, the young lady and the sexton set out. Gloria picked up her skirts, Caifás carefully holding the umbrella so that his guardian angel should be as little wetted as possible and pointing out to her the puddles in the road and the stones which stood up, on to which she could step.

“ I am quite anxious,” repeated Gloria. “ What can have happened at home ?”

Near the Abbey church but somewhat higher was the cemetery, enclosed by a thick wall of coarse rubble, which formed one side of the street leading to the town gate ; Gloria never passed it without a certain sense of pious regret.

“What a bad night for my poor little brothers, Caifás!” said she.

“They do not feel the cold as we do,” replied the sexton.

“That is true; but we are so constituted, we are so clogged by the earth we live on, that we cannot think of the soul without the body it wore.”

Suddenly there was a fresh blast from the north-east, so violent as to compel them to stand still. It turned the poor umbrella inside out and Caifás had the greatest difficulty in preventing it from being snatched out of his hands by the wind. A branch torn off by the hurricane was blown across quite close to Gloria’s face, and then the rain came down again lashing them furiously.

“God have mercy upon us!” exclaimed the terrified girl, and as she spoke a livid glare lighted up the town; Gloria saw a streak of fire which darted quivering down on to the roofs, and at that instant the thunder-clap echoed through the streaming atmosphere.

“The lightning has fallen,” cried Gloria in anguish. “Caifás, Caifás—do not you think it has struck our house?” She stood still, breathless with terror and staring towards the east, but in the blackness that succeeded the flash it was impossible to distinguish the buildings.

"It is in that direction, but much farther off. Do not be frightened Señorita, it has fallen somewhere on the coast."

"Let us run Caifás. It half killed me with fright. I could have sworn it had struck our house—I am so stupidly nervous to-night."

"It is the man," said Caifás laughing. "The man who has dropped from the sky—the man I dreamed about."

"Good God! are you drunk, José—will you hold your tongue? You see how nervous I am; you will make me ill."

"Then I will hold my tongue."

"Let us make haste—come; here we are at last. I see a light in my father's window. Everything seems quiet."

The night was very dark, but not so dark as to conceal the existence of a large pool of water formed by the rain in front of the Lantiguas' house.

"This is a pretty state of things, Caifás—the plaza is a lake."

"I will carry you over Señorita," said Caifás preparing to carry his words into effect.

"No, no—that will not do. Round here, and by the side alley we can get into the old house. I think I can see that the great gates are open."

It has already been said that the house con-

sisted in fact of two buildings, the old ancestral residence of the Lantiguas and the modern mansion built by the rich uncle from whom Don Juan had inherited it. The two were in fact one, both inside and out; but the older part only contained two or three habitable rooms. The rest were used as granaries and store-rooms, while on the ground-floor there was a good stable and coach-house. Gloria went in by the great gate of the old house, after thanking Mundideo warmly for his escort.

She hastily ran up the creaking stairs, crossed a long and empty corridor, and entered a large room which was now used to keep fruit in, and which contained empty sacks and chests and such lumber. This led into another room which adjoined the new part of the house and which was furnished as a bedroom.

Gloria opened the door and was excessively astonished to see a light in this room which was not at present used by any one. She went in and looked round, standing still and speechless with surprise for a few minutes. There was a man in the room.

He was lying at full length on the bed and covered with blankets, all but his head. On the table near him stood a candle. Gloria went up to the bed and looking at this head she saw a pale

and suffering face, marked here and there with livid bruises; the lips were parted, the eyes closed, the brows somewhat knit and the hair wet. The profile of this face was extraordinarily fine and the forehead, under the dark, disordered curls was fair and noble. From the straight brow, slightly arched towards the temples, started the line of an aquiline nose, as delicate and faultless as if it had been chiselled by a master-hand. A chestnut moustache and a beard which parted naturally below the chin into two points, added to the gravity and dignity of features which were as nearly as possible perfect. Gloria, in the brief space of her observation, irresistibly compared the face before her with that of the figure of the Saviour in the Abbey, enshrined in a glass case and wrapped in a winding sheet of the whitest and finest lawn.

But she had not had time to hazard any inferences, when the door on the side of the new house was opened, and with the greatest care to make no noise, Don Angel and Don Juan came in.

“Ah! You are here?” exclaimed Don Juan.

“How did you get in?”

“By the old gate.”

“I could not send to fetch you my child, for we have not had a moment’s time to think even.— You see,” and he pointed to the man on the bed.

"We have had plenty to do, child," said the Bishop with some pride. "We have been well employed, and we have witnessed a deed of heroism?"

Gloria's looks asked for farther explanation.

"We have here—we have him safe—an unfortunate young man whom we have succeeded in saving from the fury of the waves. What a satisfaction, what a legitimate joy!"

"But we must not make a noise," said Don Juan. "The doctor says that there is nothing to fear; but he must be left to rest."

"And who is he?" asked Gloria.

"He is—our neighbor. What can it matter? Thank God that he should have allowed us to perform this act of charity!"

"Still it was Don Silvestre."

"Did Don Silvestre save him?"

"From the very midst of the waves my child. I am still agitated when I think of it. What an evening we have gone through! The poor shipwrecked creatures have been taken into the different houses in the town and he fell to us.—But you are drenched my child; go and change your clothes at once."

The man on the bed moved a little and murmured a few words in a language which neither of the three could understand.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STEAMER PLANTAGENET.

WE must go back a few hours in our story.

After his Reverence the Bishop had made the observation before quoted: "Poor sailors!" the party of promenaders had done their utmost to reach, at any rate temporary shelter in the sheds of the custom-house. All lamented the mishap, and although Don Angel laughed to revive the spirits of the others, the feeling of annoyance was more loudly expressed than that of amusement. That solemn personage Dr. Lopez Sedeño was so unlucky as to plunge his foot into a puddle above his ankle, an accident over which he was unanimously condoled with. At last they reached the custom-house, and felt like voyagers safely landed after a dangerous passage between reefs and storms.

"It is an occasion for singing a *Te-Deum*," exclaimed Romero shaking his dripping skirts; but Don Angel, taking his seat on a barrel which was rolled out for the purpose, only repeated: "Poor sailors!"

At the very instant they heard the boom of a

gun. It was a vessel signalling for help. They all gazed out to sea through the driving scud, and there could discern a pale ghostly form, tossing its wild arms as it seemed in the air, and vomiting smoke.

"A steamer, a steamer!" they all exclaimed at once; and in a moment a crowd of sailors and fishermen had collected on the narrow strip of seawall.

"It is running on to The Camels!"

To the left of the estuary lay a shoal of rocks which at low-tide were completely uncovered, and at high-tide could be traced by a line of breakers. One of the more prominent of these rocks was "backed like a camel;" hence the name of "The Camels" as applied to the whole reef.

"Christ have mercy upon them! Poor souls!" exclaimed the Bishop, standing at the door of the shed.

"Does any one know the vessel?"

"It is English," said a sailor.

"Yes, it is the Plantagenet," said a stranger who happened to be looking on. "I saw her last week moored by the quay at Macozanedo, landing an English cargo."

"And will she be lost?" asked the gentlemen anxiously.

“She must have lost her rudder; they do not seem to be able to steer her,” said a tall and handsome sailor, dressed in a coarse woollen shirt and trousers turned up so as to show the whole of his legs to the knee, while his manly young head was covered by a sou’wester off which the water ran in rivulets.

“But all those poor souls will be drowned!” cried Don Juan in a tone of horror. “German we ought to make an effort to help them.”

“It would be rushing to meet death, señor,” said German lifting his hand to the brim of his sou’wester.

The Plantagenet during this discussion as to her fate was nearing The Camels. The steam rushed from her funnel with wild shrieks of rage, as an animal howls when it is wounded to death. It was a heavily-built barque with no elegance of form; it was a merchant-vessel and the hull was a mere storehouse, while the rigging was adapted to use rather than ornament—three masts with the necessary sheets and spars. The foremast had two yards and, from the mizzen which was a very small one, floated a red flag, blackened by smoke and wet, but still recognizable as the English Jack. The forepart of the ship rode much too high, displaying the lowest figures of her water-mark and the

badly-painted, rust-stained lower planks. She rolled fearfully, displaying now her straining side and then again her decks in the wildest confusion, all black, and washed by the seas she shipped, the hatchways, the cabin roof over the machinery, the bridge and the black funnel marked with a T, the initial of Taylor & Co., of Swansea, owners of thirty-two ships for freight and passengers.

The hapless vessel filled the spectators with that mixed emotion of pity and terror which is inseparable from the sight of imminent danger when we can render no assistance. They saw her fighting her way through the waves, vainly hoping to clear the rocks, and her very aspect seemed to acquire a character of its own, the personal element which an interesting object of study assumes in the eyes of those who watch it. To those who stood on land it was no longer a vessel, but a living thing, a shipwrecked wretch, that was struggling with the surges; they saw her break the waves with her stubborn front and shake them off as if to gain breath through the openings for the anchor-chains, which looked like gaping nostrils. The screw churned the waters, cutting a deeper trough in the waves and throwing up long wreaths of foam. The hull seemed to swallow great gulps of water and then, as she rolled, to vomit them in

cataracts at the port-holes, while the chimney never ceased its deep imprecation in the form of dense white steam that rushed out with a hideous roar like the shouting of a wounded whale.

“Serve the d——d English right!” said German. “They are a set of drunkards.”

“God knows how many pints of brandy are being drunk at this moment in the captain’s cabin!” added another man.

“Do not talk scandal now my children,” said the Bishop in a tone of horror. “Let us rather see if nothing can be done to save these wretched men.”

German replied with an ominous face and gesture.

“This vessel was coming to our port,” continued the prelate, anxious to try every means of exciting the interest of the rough mariners of Ficóbriga, “with the purpose of bringing us necessities, merchandise, work and pay.”

“Begging your Reverence’s pardon—” growled a by-stander, “the Plantagenet cannot get over our bar. It can only be that on her way home to England she found she was in some way damaged and wanted to take shelter in the bay while she repaired her machinery. However, now she has lost her rudder and, as your Reverence may see,

in a couple of hours she will want nothing more in this world."

"Yes, I see that nothing can save the ship—but the crew, the living souls—"

At this juncture the miserable steamer's head went round to the northeast and her hind part sank deeper into the sea; she was caught in the trap. The sharp jaws of the rocks nipped the keel and the screw like an iron vice, there was no escaping their clutch. The perishing ship lifted her bows, showing all the forepart of her hull and part of her keel. She moved no more but with a convulsive shiver; the ruined tackle shook with a last agony, then the foremast with its double cross of spars gave way and fell like a broken stick. The waves still rose, marching victoriously over the dead body of the now immovable vessel, and taking possession with a ferocious and greedy triumph. One tumbled wildly in and rushed down to the hold, another flung itself over the deck, making a clean sweep of everything in its way; one danced insultingly up the shrouds and through the rigging, another dashed itself against the black bellying hull, while yet another, the most audacious of all, leaped over the funnel and poured down it to drown the engines.

"My sons, my children!" exclaimed the Bishop

in a voice of inspired dignity. "We are not Christians—we are unworthy to be Spaniards, if we leave those poor creatures to perish."

The sailors muttered and growled and looked from one to another as if to see which was the bravest. But the bravest did not seem to be forthcoming.

"It is impossible your Reverence," said German at last, "quite impossible," and he shrunk back among the others.

"It seems to me that the sea is subsiding," said Don Juan hoping to persuade two sailors who were his particular friends: "Courage, Boys!"

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!" said the good Bishop with fervent exaltation, "I implore you to rescue these hapless shipwrecked men. In the name of our Saviour Christ—"

There was utter silence—each man scratched his head and paused. Then one and another slipped away and up the hill towards home.

"Señor we shall be drowned too," exclaimed German. "Do not you see the waves are running mountains high?"

"Away with you, cowards!" said a vigorous, deep voice; a terrible voice worthy to be heard above the awful music of the waters. It was that of the curé.

“What—you? you will venture, señor curé?”

“And why should I not venture?” shouted Don Silvestre throwing off his cloak, his priest’s hat, his umbrella—all his cumbersome paraphernalia. His natural impetuosity and indomitable courage, not unused to face the forces of Nature, came out at the right moment in a really sublime manner.

“Right, right, soldier of Christ! Well done worthy priest!—Learn from him, O, ye of little faith!” exclaimed the Bishop, shedding tears of pious enthusiasm.

Don Silvestre bared his arms, showing his muscular wrists and hands as hairy as a bear’s paws—hands which could hold an oar as well as carry the sacred wafer. Then throwing off his cassock he pulled on a worsted jersey.

“Haul down the boat and a rope, two or three!—and let us see who is brave enough to come with me.”

“I—I—I”—All were ready to go.

“You,” said the curé, “and you and you,” and he hastily selected his crew.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CURÉ OF FICÓBRIGA.

THE moment had arrived—but before writing of the deed we must describe the hero.

DON Silvestre was young, fresh colored, strong and tall, bold even to rashness, ambitious of applause and fond of always finding himself in the foremost ranks; he was a warm friend to his friends and at the same time very eager, very hearty, quick-tempered but generous, frank and genial in his manner to high and low. In his church he was much run after by the gentler sex because he preached with a certain exaltation and in a picturesque and dramatic style; but the ungentle sex approved of him also, because he got through the mass with great expedition; so that when Padre Poquito celebrated mass—a slow and heavy man—all these faithful souls were overwhelmed with business and obliged to stand talking in the plaza.

“There is no one like Don Silvestre for a short mass,” they would say. “We are not idle folks who can afford to waste time or take a nap in

church. He goes through all the ceremonies and says all the Latin at a pace that is quite delightful."

Don Silvestre was a rich man. Besides possessing a fortune by inheritance, he had managed to acquire some arable and pasture land and had invested a round sum in the funds. He lived in much comfort himself, and though he did not torment or threaten his poor tenants for rent, he did not neglect the management of his property. He succored the needy, somewhat priding himself on his liberal almsgiving, by which and by his frank and happy nature, he lived greatly in charity and favor with his neighbors.

"Don Silvestre is no saint," they said. "But he is a gentleman."

Don Silvestre had moreover an iron constitution fortified by frequent exercise both in hunting and fishing, in which diversions he passed the major part of his existence. His house was a perfect arsenal of weapons for sport of both kinds, the like of which was not to be seen in all the country round. One room was wholly devoted to rifles, carbines, knives and traps and a hundred ingenious and complicated devices, some acquired, others the invention of his own genius, and all intended to scatter destruction among the feathered

tribes; while in another every contrivance was to be seen which could snatch from the deep each creature that swims. Rods, lines, tackle and various kinds of floats, baits, hooks, harpoons and spears—some for cod-fishing others for smaller fish; artificial flies to betray the innocent trout in the brook, gaffs for the salmon in the rivers, seines, and other kinds of nets, for trawling, dredging and hauling—this Nimrod of the land and water had them all. Romero had been born in that delightful region known as Europe, where it nevertheless would seem that man easily slips back to that primitive hunting stage of civilization—or barbarism—when he had to dispute the soil with the wild beasts, and it was hard to tell whether it would remain in possession of the stronger or of the more wily. Active, keen, enterprising and bold he, with other young men of the neighborhood, had even defied the dreadful bear. He had made himself familiar with the broken and rugged ground, the precipices and torrents, and all the dangers of a locality which, since the last cataclysm that had wrecked it, seemed never to have assumed any definite form, but had remained content in its savage wildness and freedom.

But the paternal voice had one day sounded in his ears warning him to consider the advisa-

bility of not letting slip certain ecclesiastical build-
fices, and Silvestre had crammed himself with a
due quantum of Latin and been ordained. And
he was not a bad curé; he forgot or shed many
things—but never his inborn love of the chase.

“It is a vice”—people would say, “but a royal
one.”

Don Silvestre was an impetuous and a some-
what wrong-headed mortal. In the discharge of
anything he imagined to be his duty he always
displayed considerable zeal; at one time he had set
his mind on restoring and repairing the church and
he himself was painter, mason and architect. When
appeals were made to him to aid in the elections,
he did wonders; his good fortune, the prestige he
enjoyed among the lower orders, his jolly and gen-
tlemanly nature all combined to command an army
of electors and to have the happiest effect in the
neighborhood. He placed his good-will and his
influence at the service of the cause with so much
eagerness, that during the perilous period when the
natives of Ficóbriga were exercising this, the most
important of their rights as citizens, the worthy
Don Silvestre never was still in his garden, or by
the sea-shore, nor even in the sacristy or his own
house, but was rushing about from one place to
another like a man possessed by the devil, or a dis-

tribes a lover. He was to be seen skilfully availing himself, now of his astuteness, now of blandishments, using stern coercion to one, and to another insinuating cunning; and in this way he reduced every one to terms.

By all this experience Romero had succeeded in acquiring a perfect mastery of the arts and mysteries of electioneering, which never are really easy to learn; and while many a man lost his position and prestige by them, the curé of Ficóbriga by his acuteness and cleverness was lauded to the skies. To ride on horseback, to go through frost and snow for six leagues to defy the foe; to steal a march on the opposition and recruit his own forces, and still without any excessive or scandalous increase in the electioneering expenses, to realize the miracle of the loaves and fishes as applied to the schedule of electors—were so many exploits which only added to Don Silvestre's credit. In evidence of his energetic and all-conquering will a story shall here be told which was current in Ficóbriga at the time of my narration.

The election was eagerly contested and on the point of being lost. Among the voters who had come to vote at the last moment was a shepherd of some remote outlying part, a dull lout who could hardly speak his mother-tongue. Tired of

keeping the line in front of the door of the building where the registrars were taking the votes, and cursing the political privilege which he had come so far out of his customary rustic groove to exercise, he had turned upon his heel and was walking away. Not far from the place of voting was a stream, fordable higher up, but just here very deep, and our friend, in order to cross it, turned towards Villadiego. This lost vote might seriously affect the issue of the election. Don Silvestre marked the event, and with shouts of rage called to the countryman who was already safe on the other bank and who, finding himself at a judicious distance with the river between him and the foe, flourished his fists with gestures of mockery and defiance. Don Silvestre, exasperated at this savage clown, who not only made off at the critical moment of voting but, by his grotesque gesticulations insulted him—Don Silvestre—in the moment of his supremacy, did not hesitate a moment but with prompt decision threw himself into the water. Being a good swimmer and having flung off his cassock, in a few seconds he was standing on the opposite shore of the little river. He rushed after the fugitive, seized him by the collar, and dragging him back with irresistible vigor and rapidity he shoved him into the water; then, holding on by

his hair, he triumphantly towed him across and led him—both streaming with water—into the voting booth where he placed him in front of the urn.

This vigorous proceeding struck terror into the hearts of the doubtful and recalcitrant, and secured the election to Don Silvestre's party.

Many more such anecdotes might be related in farther evidence of the indomitable spirit of this worthy, but there is no need to add to the details of this portrait. To complete a sketch which though brief, is accurate, I may say that Don Silvestre was equally skilled in playing draughts and chess. He and Don Juan de Lantigua fought peaceably over the board almost every evening.

He had two or three fishing-boats of his own and often went out to sea, so that he was as familiar with the terrible element, and as learned in its changeful moods as any professional expert. He could swim like a fish, and was the astonishment of all his neighbors in doing battle with the waves; and in holding the tiller, or taking an oar, or managing the stern sheet while the boat was riding in over the bar, the most experienced fishermen were hardly his match. The people would say that the sea was afraid of him, and that he could say of it that he mocked at that Dragon.

When we first become acquainted with him, Don Silvestre's favorite occupation and golden dream was the cultivation of a beautiful garden and orchard that he had made in a spot known as the Copse of Brijan, facing Ficóbriga, and on the opposite side of the river, beyond the bridge of Judas. There he would spend the chief part of the day, without however—to his honor be it said—neglecting his duties in the parish. Although he usually lived in Ficóbriga, he had a pretty house at the Copse, with the finest garden produce in all the country round and a large paddock and stables full of creatures '*pusilla cum magnis*,' of every sort and kind. Peacocks, geese and fowls of all kinds, milch cows, rabbits, corpulent swine, whose backs he would complacently rake with the end of his stick, exotic birds and goats—in short everything that could take or give pleasure in a country life.

But in these latter days of our narrative, Don Silvestre had not been attending much to his model farm at the Copse, being much absorbed in the election matters of his friend Don Rafael del Horro. This friendship had been cemented by their connection in certain newspapers, and by the merits of certain letters written, as has been said, by Don Silvestre to a Madrid journal and signed

with the *nom de plume* of 'the mountain shepherd.' Rafael del Horro was now living in the curé's house, and most of their hours were spent in gratifying discussions as to the resources at their disposal and the chances of a triumphant issue. They had agreed to take their stand, side by side, on the field of battle and never to retreat till they had achieved a complete victory over the "unrighteous and infidels."

This was the singular and daring man who had declared: "I will save these shipwrecked wretches."

A minute later and he had sprung into the boat which boldly rushed out on the waves. Don Silvestre had perfect faith in his own strong arm, and his skill and experience as a boatman.

The little barque bravely faced the breakers; it rose on their threatening crests and disappeared in the trough behind, hidden too by the whirling clouds of spray. Now it seemed as though the waters had swallowed it at a gulp, again, as if the gulf had spewed it out from jaws foaming with rage. Still, it made way, feeble but brave—like faith amid the turbulent waters of a wicked world.

Don Angel had taken off his green sombrero, which was reduced to a sponge, and kneeling in the mire, prayed aloud; Don Juan, Rafael and

Sedeño were deeply touched by this manifestation of a pure and exalted christian spirit.

“They will get to them—they will reach them and save them,” said Don Angel, with the profound conviction of eager faith. “God will hear our prayers.”

The brave party had nearly reached the ship, they caught the stout rope that was flung to them, and in less than an hour the whole crew were on shore. As the boat turned to pull back to land, the storm began to lull and the waves subsided, as if Ocean itself, the implacable main, were moved to pity.

When the hapless crew, eight in all, set foot on shore, Don Angel embraced them all, mingling his tears with the salt-water with which they were drenched. The alcalde (magistrate) and his secretary, the constable and a crowd of others, including Don Juan Amarillo who filled the post of French consul, had collected on the beach. In an instant they had arranged to give the unfortunate shipwrecked men the assistance and shelter they needed, one and another taking refuge in the different houses that could accommodate them; and one, who had had a severe blow and had lost consciousness, was given into the care of Señor de Lantigua.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SHIPWRECKED HERO.

THEY lifted and carried him with the greatest care, they put him to bed, and Don Nicomedes came, the worthy doctor of Ficóbriga.

“Blows on the head which do not seem to be serious,”—he said, “and some choking with salt-water.”

He prescribed some simple domestic remedies and rest and quiet. Everything was done with equal promptness and zeal, and the injured man, after murmuring a few words in a low voice, seemed to be sleeping easily. They then left him alone for a few minutes and presently, when Don Juan returned, the gentleman—for he was beyond a doubt a gentleman—opened his eyes, looking around him with eager curiosity.

“Keep perfectly quiet I beg,” said Don Juan, “you are among friends, well taken care of, and shall want for nothing. The peril has been fearful but, thank God! you and your worthy comrades are all in safety.” The patient spoke a few words in English, and looking from one to the other he

fixed a pair of large blue eyes on the faces of Gloria, Don Juan and Don Angel, as if mere sight were a recovered joy. Just so might a man look who had risen from the grave.

“Where am I?” he asked in Spanish.

“In Spain, in Ficóbriga, an insignificant seaport town which has been so unfortunate as to witness the loss of the Plantagenet, but at the same time so happy as to snatch eight men from the sea.” In a tone of deep and pathetic feeling the young man said:

“O Lord our God how marvellous is thy name in all the world!” and the Bishop echoed his words, quoting the Psalm in Latin. Then there was a pause of solemn silence, during which each one present could almost hear the agitated beating of his own heart.

“And now, how do you find yourself?”

“Well, well,” said the patient in a confident tone and laying his hand upon his heart he added: “Many thanks.”

“Though you speak Spanish it seems to me that you must be a foreigner.”

“Yes, Señor—I am a foreigner.”

“English?” “No, Señor, I come from Altona.”

“Altona!” said his Reverence, who was not

strong in modern geography. "And where is that?" And he went to look at an old map hanging on the wall.

"It is on the Elbe not far from Hamburg," said Don Juan.

"I am a native of Hamburg," said the patient in a firm voice. "But my family is English. I lived for six months in Seville and Córdoba three years since, and now—"

"You were going to England?"

"He ought not to talk much yet," said his Reverence anxiously. "We will leave him to repose."

"Thank you, Señor, but I can talk. Yes, I was going to England, but God would not permit—"

His face expressed the deepest trouble.

"Be quiet, my friend," said Don Juan. "You have nothing to be uneasy about. You will get home yet. Have you any family?"

"Parents, brothers—"

"Your only care now is to rest and get well; you will want for nothing in my house. My name is Juan de Lantigua; this is my brother Angel, Bishop of Tresestrellas, and this young girl is my daughter Gloria. We will take the tenderest care of you; God has bidden us comfort the unhappy

and cherish the suffering. It is not every day that the opportunity offers for a work of mercy."

The stranger looked at Don Angel and at Gloria as Don Juan introduced them and then, taking Don Juan's hand he pressed it to his breast.

"He that followeth after mercy findeth life, righteousness and honor," he said; and again the Bishop repeated the quotation in Latin from the twenty-first chapter of Proverbs.

"Now," said Señor de Lantigua, "rest my friend. Señor what is your name?"

"Daniel."

"And your surname?"

"Morton," and the stranger went on to add the warmest expressions of regard and gratitude. He seemed to devour the three with his eyes, as if they were a celestial apparition that had dawned suddenly on him in the midst of the horrors and darkness of death.

"What we have been able to do deserves neither praise nor such gratitude," said Don Juan. "It is the simplest and easiest of the commands of Christ.—But you must take some food. Gloria, have something tempting prepared for this gentleman. Of course he must not have any but light food at present."

CHAPTER XX.

HIS REVERENCE'S ADMIRABLE PROJECT.

SIX times had the sun risen over the bold summit of Monteluz, by the sea; six times had it set behind La Cotera de Fronilde, bathing the mountains in purple haze, and nothing that appears worthy of record had happened in the house of the Lantiguas. The leisure hours were wholly filled with singing fervent praises of Don Silvestre's heroic deed, and with comments now on the human, and now on the divine aspect of the rescue; but regarding each through a glorifying haze, as in truth was well deserved, while, according to Don Angel, the result was a miracle wrought by the sublime faith and herculean strength which the great Romero owed to the mercy of God.

The news soon spread throughout the province, which enjoyed the supreme honor of possessing on its happy soil the illustrious town of Ficóbriga; it even reached Madrid, *en route* for London, where in fact it ultimately became known.

Who so proud as Don Silvestre? During these

days he had worn a countenance as beaming as the noonday sun, while he was never tired of describing the sublime perils of the moment, and painting the fury of the storm-lashed sea in terms so vivid that his hearers seemed to see it all. Daniel Morton, more than any one, delighted in listening to Señor Romero's history of the shipwreck and miraculous rescue, and knew not how to express his gratitude, since the mere proffer of a deep and life-long friendship seemed wholly inadequate.

The stranger thus snatched from a watery grave was not yet able to leave the room which had been assigned to him, but he received frequent visits from all the household, who treated him with the utmost consideration and affection. He, for his part, well deserved all the attention he received, for he was a man of singularly gentlemanly and courteous demeanor. Don Juan was not slow in discovering that his involuntary guest was a man of good birth and distinguished breeding, of delightful manners, gracious in his gratitude to all; and he then found that his nature was honorable and his spirit lofty, his mind highly intelligent and of such wide culture, that all the members of Lantigua's family were fairly astounded at his knowledge.

"There is no doubt that he is a most accomplished gentleman," said Don Juan to his brother, as they and Doctor Sedeño were sitting over their chocolate, on their return from the Abbey church, where the Bishop celebrated mass daily.

"None whatever. He pleases me extremely," replied the Bishop. "What a pity that he should be a Protestant?"

"Is he?"

"He must be," said Sedeño. "And whenever we touch upon religious subjects he tries to turn the conversation or to drop out of it."

"But has he said anything derogatory to our holy Church?"

"Nothing, not a word. He is very deferential in all that concerns catholicism, and I have never heard him utter a word that could be taken as an offence, nor even by a suggestive silence.—"

"What an opportunity my dear brother," interrupted Don Angel with devout eagerness, "for making a grand conquest, for leading a lost sheep into the true fold."

Don Juan was doubtful.

"It would be a hard task," he said. "That man has convictions."

"But his convictions are dangerous. Listen to me—as I intend to try—"

“Take care; these heretics when you touch their heresy are like the porcupine—”

“Nothing can be lost by trying, man. He must remain in your house for some time yet, for it will not be right to let him go before he is perfectly convalescent.”

“Certainly not.”

“Well then, what can we lose in the matter? I will say something to him which must go to his soul. I will sow the seed, my son, and if it falls on stony ground it will not be my fault. I shall have done my duty.”

“It will fall in stony ground,” said Don Juan with the conviction of a man accustomed to contemplate a world in ruins, and wearied of scattering seed broadcast on a soil whence nothing ever could spring.

“But think, if God were to touch his heart—if a ray of divine light—I shall know no peace till I have made the attempt.”

“You will lose your time, my dear brother.”

“I think not. I can see that this man has no vulgar soul; on the contrary, he has a singularly enlightened mind.”

“That is certain, more’s the pity.”

“And a noble heart.”

“Equally true.”

“Well, we have then the chief thing, a promising soil.”

“And prejudices, habits, foregone conclusions, firmly grounded ideas—that is to say a growth of noxious weeds which has already struck root and taken possession?”

“Weeds man! I laugh at the weeds. Our Saviour has taught us to pluck them out and cast them into the fire. I will not be discouraged till I have made the attempt. Will you allow me to press him to prolong his stay by a few days?”

“Just as you wish. We shall see how he takes it. But do not let us end by losing his warm regard, and even perhaps the gratitude he feels—”

“It is just that gratitude that I propose to work upon. That is the chink for the thin end of the wedge, the soft place in his heart; in there and we shall see!—”

Don Juan laughed and called his daughter. Gloria had breakfasted at an hour when the birds were still saluting the dawn; for she had much to do, had the Señorita de Lantigua, and it was necessary to begin the day early. As she came into the dining-room with the hasty step of a person who has a heap of business on her hands, her father said:

"Have you forgotten the coffee for our friend up-stairs?"

"No, papa, I have this moment taken it up."

"What bad taste in this foreigner not to like chocolate!" exclaimed Don Angel finishing off what was left in the chocolate pot. "Gloria, my child, come with me and take a turn in the garden."

Sedeño took up a paper he had received the previous evening, and fixed his gaze on it through his spectacles, assuming an air of great importance.

"You see what irreligion leads to, Señor Don Juan," said he dashing his left hand emphatically on the printed sheet before him. "Only hear this case." And he read it aloud.

Don Juan, pushing aside the chocolate tray bent his hand round behind his ear to serve as an ear-trumpet. He was slightly deaf, particularly with his right ear, and when there was any atmospheric disturbance. Don Angel meanwhile had gone out humming a tune and accompanied by his niece.

"Little one," said he, "your father wishes to speak to you."

Gloria felt a pang of alarm, for she remembered that the last time, a few days since, when her uncle had said the same words it had been on the vexatious subject of Don Rafael del Horro. As she

passed into the garden through the porch she pulled a spray of honeysuckle to suck the honey out of the ends of the flowers.

"Juan complains that you have given him no answer to a question he asked you."

"I know, I know!"—said Gloria feeling that every word her uncle spoke struck like a thorn into her heart.

"However, I do not interfere in such matters," added his Reverence. "You must come to an understanding with your father. It is not as if the young man were off and away to-day. But do me the favor not to walk so fast, for my legs, child, are none of the best. Since the day of the great storm—"

"When they saved Señor Morton—"

"Yes and I consider the ducking well recompensed. It was a great triumph. Tell me one thing about that gentleman—"

Gloria, nibbling the honeysuckle, listened with all her soul.

"Have you observed," continued his Reverence pausing in his walk, "whether this gentleman—"

"Señor Morton?"

"Precisely; if Señor Morton has ever uttered a word on the subject of our sacred religion."

“ I have heard him speak of God, of—wait a minute, I will think.”

“ That is not the point, silly child. They all speak of God ; how few know him ! Have you heard him say anything in any way depreciating our holy faith ?”

“ No uncle—”

“ Because, I will tell you, my brother and I, and Sedeño too, have come to the conclusion that this man is a Protestant.”

“ A Protestant !” Gloria stood still with horror. “ That means to say that he will be damned !—It is a pity that with such a good heart—”

“ Of course it is a pity—I will confess to you that I am truly grieved about it ; deeply and sincerely grieved.”

“ It makes one long to run to him at once and cry out: “ Señor for God’s sake save yourself, think where you are going—Come, come with us.”

“ Just so—as when we see a blind man rushing on to a precipice; you have rendered my feeling exactly. Since the day when this young man came into the house I have never been quite easy, and the day he leaves it I shall be miserable, that is to say, if he leaves it as he entered it—blind.”

“ Protestant.”

“Just so, and it seems to me that I am an unworthy apostle of Christ if I do not succeed—”

“In converting him?” asked Gloria incredulously.

“You think it will be difficult? But things more difficult than that have been done. It is impossible that God should have created so fair a specimen of humanity only to be lost eternally. Who knows whether in His infinite wisdom He may not have led this man to our shores, and through his shipwreck have opened to him the way of salvation.”

“Oh! who knows!” exclaimed Gloria, raising her eyes to heaven as though to enquire whether her uncle’s theory could be a true one: “God is admirable in his dispensations!”

“He is the Truth, the Life, and the Way. Well, I am determined to address myself to this young man; to speak to him boldly, face to face, as the minister of Christ that I am, and to say to him: ‘Morton, you ought to be a Catholic.’”

“Quite right uncle!” exclaimed Gloria, clasping her hands with enthusiasm while her eyes sparkled with moisture.

“I am quite determined,” continued his Reverence, feeling himself full of the apostolic aspiration which so greatly adorned him in the pulpit,

“to say to him, as Christ said to Lazarus: ‘Morton, arise! Morton, come forth! You were not born to dwell in that abyss of darkness. Cast off those sacrilegious grave clothes and gaze on the light I hold up before your eyes, this divine light which the Lord has vouchsafed to entrust to me that it may guide you and illuminate your path. Come, rest on my heart, my son, come and add to the glory of Christ’s kingdom by your splendid intelligence, your finely-strung nature, your noble but erring soul.’ And if he obeys my bidding, that day will be the most glorious of my life; I shall have snatched a victim from Satan’s clutches, and have rescued one miserable wretch from eternal fires; have gained one sheep for Christ’s fold, and extended the sacred dominion of the Church, and when God calls me to himself I may say: ‘Lord I have won one battle against the Foe.’”

“Oh, uncle, dear, good uncle!” exclaimed Gloria, frantically kissing the prelate’s hands which were trembling with emotion and excitement; “You are a saint.”

“A saint! no, but, as I consider this case, I cannot forget that of the young man called Saul, who was afterwards so glorious an apostle. I shall be content to fill the part of Ananias, who by God’s command went in search of the persecutor

of the Church and said to him: 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith and arose and was baptized.'"

"Saint Paul!" murmured Gloria.

"Yes, and one of the most glorious converts to the Christian faith. This man was so sagacious that our Lord desired to bring him into His fold, and He brought him. In the last two or three days I have thought of nothing else; and as I talk more with this young man and hear his words and measure the height of his discernment and intelligence, my desire grows to say to him: 'Brother Saul, Jesus Christ has sent me to restore you to sight.' In all heroic deeds the more valuable is the conquest to be made the more we rise to the occasion; the soul displays more energy and valor in proportion to the importance of the stronghold to be conquered and to the fame and skill of the enemy."

"And as Daniel seems—"

"Nay, does not seem—is—is one of the most perfect of God's creatures. When I watch the strong and lofty flights of his spirit, I say again

and again: 'What a pity! O Lord, what a pity!' Do you remember his beautiful explanation of the relations of the forces of Nature to the mystery of Divine foreknowledge?"

"Oh yes! I remember."

"And his reflections on the death of his two young sisters who caught a fever while nursing the sick?"

"Yes, uncle, yes—I remember very well."

"And how all he said showed the simplicity of his sentiments, a patriarchal innocence free from all guile, and his admiration for all the works of God?"

"Yes indeed—I recollect it all."

"And then his kindly feeling for our poor and unhappy country?"

"Yes uncle—everything."

"And as I see him and hear him, how can I help saying: 'What a pity—what a pity!'"

"What a pity!" echoed Gloria, clasping her hands and raising them to the level of her chin.

"To-day—this very day, I propose beginning my great undertaking," said the Bishop with lofty decision. "At last we may do something grand in our petty lives."

"This very day?—but, to be sure, he will be going soon!" said Gloria with feigned simplicity.

“No, for your father and I have agreed to tell him that he must remain in Ficóbriga and indeed in our house for another fortnight—perhaps a month.”

“Then, uncle—then,” exclaimed the girl, hardly able to conceal her joy, “you will triumph, the Church of Christ must triumph! Oh! what a good idea you and papa have had!”

“I think I shall go and tell him at once. He will no doubt accept, for he is not very strong, and the quiet of this place must be good for him. To-day I will speak to him of religion, and I cannot lack for arguments. With a good heart and a sound nature half the work is done.—Do you know if he is up yet?”

“Roque can tell us.” The man-servant was crossing the garden.

“Is Señor Morton up yet?”

“Yes, Señor; I am going on an errand for him,” and he showed them a large bundle.

“What is that?”

“All the clothes that Señor Daniel had in the trunks that got wet. He is sending them to the Señor Don Silvestre to give to the poor.”

“I will wager,” said Gloria angrily, “that he will not give a rag of them to Caifás.”

“ I will go up to him at once,” said the Bishop resolutely.

Gloria accompanied him to the foot of the stairs, then she ran off to the kitchen. Her whole soul was soaring in some supernal region of purest ether and full celestial light—like the angels who wave their pinions round the throne of the great Lord of all creation.

CHAPTER XXI.

A WHITED SEPULCHRE.

THE contrast was a strange one indeed which, while her soul had fled like a bird to the hills—as the Psalmist hath it—held her body in so humble a spot as a kitchen; where, after turning up her sleeves from her white arms and tying on a large white apron, she proceeded to beat with a light hand a mass of eggs—yolks and whites—which soon rose in the deep pan to a frothy mountain of fragile foam. The fork, which she whisked so fast that it was almost invisible, tossed up a pale gold cloud, and the transparent albumen

boiled up in tempting amber balls or a shower of pale, transparent topaz. Then she lifted the mixture from one pan to another, peeled a lemon, minced it finely, stirred some flour into the eggs, took out of a box certain dried specimens, wrinkled but sweetened by age, and which in their youth had been grapes, fetched some cakes, and finally arranged the whole concoction in a tin mould with the utmost rapidity and neatness, till Francisca, who could not endure such an invasion of her territory, broke out indignantly with :

“What are you doing there, silly girl? What sort of a mess is that?”

“You are the silly girl”—answered Gloria laughing. “What do you know of delicate cooking or of puddings?”

“And who is that for, if you please?” the maid went on in a tone of irony. “For the dog when it is done? For God’s sake, child, what need have you to come here, spoiling your hands. Go up stairs, we want no messing here.”

The old cook treated Gloria with the familiarity of servants who have seen the birth of all the children of the household. Gloria, after bustling about a good deal, announced that she had done her task and left the kitchen, going up to her own room, where she made herself neat and put on

some little finery, as it was now nearly breakfast time.*

In anticipation of that event, Don Rafael del Horro now arrived and with him the curé, both very full of the journey they were to make that day on the business of the election ; they went up stairs to pay their respects to Don Juan in his study ; but as they found him very busy with a heap of letters he was writing to various influential personages in the province, and which our two friends were to deliver, and Sedeño wholly absorbed in his study of newspaper-politics, they went down into the garden.

Gloria, after having glanced at the dining-room and seeing that Robustiana was laying the table, also went out into the garden. Here, in a spot quite near to the public road was a little grove of tall magnolias, a few firs of different kinds and two or three planes, which towered above all the rest of the vegetable tribe in the garden and, spreading their broad arms in space so far as to pass over from the enclosure on one side to fraternize with the elms on the high road, while on the other, they

* In Spain meals are eaten on the plan very usual throughout the continent of Europe. That which answers to our breakfast consists merely of a cup of coffee or chocolate with a roll or biscuit, and what is called breakfast—or *déjeuner*—is a much heavier meal at any hour from ten to one, more like what we call luncheon. There is but one other meal, which may be called dinner or supper, and is served at any hour from six to eight or nine.—*Translator.*

waved against the windows of the house. In the middle of this shady retreat stood a summer-house, round which grew a sort of thicket of spindle-trees, fragrant broom, tamarinds, veronicas, olean- ders and other shrubs, in artful mixture and confusion. Through this, in a semicircular course, led a dark and damp path where the spiders had spread their webs undisturbed, and had hung fine clammy threads from branch to branch and from tree to tree. Gloria took this path, but presently, hearing voices, stopped short. Her first idea was to pay no heed but to walk on, but she heard her own name and recognized the voice as Don Rafael's. He and the curé were talking together in the summer-house. Curiosity was too much for her and she listened.

“Gloria is perfection as you say”—remarked Don Silvestre—“and besides and above this she is the only daughter of a rich man. My opinion friend Rafael is that everything should not be sacrificed to sentiment and to ‘I love you,’ ‘I adore you,’ but that some regard should be had for the fortune and position of the happy couple. The description you have given me of the burthen that life has become in that diabolical law court perfectly horrifies me. Tell me how is law business going on.”

“Badly,” answered the young man in a tone of disgust. “Since Lantigua let every comer have a turn at his desk all the ecclesiastical business has been dispersed. Come what may something must be done.”

“And the newspaper?”

“That can hardly be accounted a lucrative profession. It is a capital means of making way in political life, and that is the only career in which a young man can get on.”

“And you have done well in it,” said the curé somewhat hyperbolically.—“At four and thirty.—This infant will make its way in the world.”

“But you do not know my friend what compromises and what frightful expenses burthened this wretched paper in its early days. The position we aimed at could only be reached—”

“Ah, ya, ya! I know all about it. A frightful outlay, and all the rest of it. But what then? Do you expect to catch fish without wetting your trousers?”

“No, no—I know what fishing means—”

“They say that in England none but rich men go into politics,” said the curé. “Now that seems to me an admirable system.”

“In Spain, on the contrary it is the opening

for poor ones. It is an evil I know ; but what is to be done ! Law is no good, my friend, excepting for those who stick to their office with such zeal as may earn them a seat in the ministry. Trade on a large scale requires capital, and on a small scale it is unworthy of a man who has worked for a professional career ; there is nothing left but that of arms, or politics—and I have no taste for arms.”

“The arms of the tongue and pen my friend,” said the curé with enthusiasm. “Do you know, if there is a thing in this world that I covet it is glory such as yours.”

“There is little in it to covet,” replied Rafael in a certain tone of dejection, which contrasted strongly with his usual boastful swagger. “I sometimes laugh at myself, and when I am alone in my office I say to myself: ‘Can it be true that you are the very man who, on occasion, can deliver such terrific diatribes, and write such furious articles to rouse the enthusiasm of your party! I—I who am incapable of killing a flea and do not wish to hurt a living creature—I preach destruction to all existing society ; I, who like every youngster in the world have my doubts about many things that we are taught in the catechism—though not about general principles—I storm and rage as

though I wished to engulf all who are not ardent believers.' ”

“ Ah, ha ! ” cried the curé laughing. “ That is a common evil nowadays.—Black men and white men alike, no one has any faith. A short time since I was talking to a man who passes all his life in writing against the disbelievers and leading and dragging in converts to the Church ; well, he said to me in confidence : ‘ Don Silvestre nothing in the world will make me believe in hell. ’ I laughed heartily at his odd confession, and we never fought it out, for I hate a discussion. We use to go out shooting together. I showed him the rough notes of my sermons that he might cast an eye over them.—Why not ? He is a man of excellent style and taste—a sort of Fray Luis de Granada without frock or the faith, the best of fellows, and an excellent man. You, too, are one of those who talk much and believe little.”

“ Nay—let us understand each other, my good friend. I believe this, that no society is possible without religion. What would not the unfettered license of the blind and ignorant masses bring us to, if religion did not bridle their evil passions ? ”

The curé laughed.

“ But faith,” he replied, “ includes something beyond a mere bridle to check and guide the ig-

norant. The cultured and learned ought to refine and purify their faith by study."

"So it ought to be no doubt," said Rafael. "Each and all ought to contribute as far as possible to uphold and strengthen that foundation of the social edifice. If religion were to fail and disappear, the demagogues and *pétroleuses* would declare war to the knife. It is fearful to think of!"

"Frightful, frightful."

"For this reason I am of opinion that masses, sermons, fasts, processions, meetings and all the rites and customs which have been devised to aid in the great work of the State, should be continued; they serve, too, as a bulwark and security to protect the upper and more influential classes."

"Then from your point of view," said the curé, laughing heartily with frank amusement, "all religious practices amount to nothing more than a kind of correctional apparatus against aggressors. But my dear Don Rafael, to carry out your system fairly we ought to say: 'Suppress religion and increase the police.'"

"Nay, nay, do not jest; and above all remember that I am talking to you in strict confidence—it must go no farther. The world would get on badly indeed without religion. Blessed, a thous-

and times blessed, are the beliefs we have inherited from our fathers and the faith in which we were cradled! How precious! how consoling is religion! women find it so full of comfort!—If a member of a family dies, a mother, a brother, a child, they believe that they shall meet again, that the lost one is in Heaven above the clouds—if a child, that it is wandering happily from star to star. Religion ought to survive as long as the world lasts, and it will survive. Besides containing many consoling elements it includes some that are irrefragable truths.”

“All its dogmas are truths, and not some, as you say,” answered the curé assuming a grave air. “If I had my books at hand, or could readily remember all the good things I have read in them, I could prove to you that everything, yes everything that the Church asserts, is truth and serves as an immense consolation to the ignorant and the learned alike, to the poor and to the rich. But I have a most provoking memory, and with all my daily occupations and business I forget everything.”

“Oh, I have read plenty too, and for my part I cannot accuse myself of ever having done any harm either to the Church or to individual ecclesiastics. On the contrary, in my speeches or in

private conversation with my political friends, I have always said: 'Gentlemen religion before anything. We must not release the people from its moral yoke.—Besides, we must keep the Church on our side; it is a great ally of the State and we must keep it in a good humor. If it asks for our cloak we must give it our coat also.' Bah! I hate these men who call themselves philosophers and free-thinkers and who set themselves up to proclaim in assemblies and in clubs, that the Church is this or that or the other. To them I say: 'Gentleman our differences are very small at bottom; how can it be denied that many of the things that the Church asks us to believe can never be made to agree with our common sense? But still, what need can there be to mount a pulpit and tell the whole world so? The ignorant mob cannot understand you, and all they will gather from your teaching is that they will plunder and murder as they please. You must look round you and think twice before you air certain doctrines.—And for this reason I am the sworn foe of those charlatans, and in my own humble sphere I defend religious belief with speech and pen; the whole dogma of the Catholic Church, its ceremonies and its priesthood—all venerable institutions on which the social order rests; I stand up for the faith of our fathers,

their simple practices, the prayers our mothers taught us in the cradle—all in fact which it is so easy to inculcate, and which is so humanizing, so sweet and beautiful—for religion is sweet and beautiful. I have been to Rome and seen many ceremonies in St. Peter's. Ah! Don Silvestre, there is something to rouse enthusiasm! and then the processions at Seville! All such things must be cherished and preserved."

"All should be preserved; still, the really important element is faith, and if that is not cherished and preserved—"

"Of course—faith as well. We must all do our best to make others believe, to diffuse the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that the creed of our fathers may continue to flourish—the creed and faith of our venerated fathers!"

"You, Rafael," said the curé, "are one of a school which defends religion out of pure selfishness; that is to say because you need it as an ally; you regard it as a body-guard, or rather a patrolling constabulary. 'Religion is a good thing,' you say, 'and ought to be accredited. I, to be sure, do not believe; but other folks ought, because then they will fear God and will do me no harm.' But in all this there is no thought of the loftier aims of religion nor of eternal life."

hypocrite

“Eternal life!” exclaimed Don Rafael. “Aye, that is the great question. An admirable scheme for preventing the disruption of society.”

“You do not believe in it?”

“Yes, I do. There must necessarily be something after and beyond death—for we can hardly be snuffed out and there an end. Still, I cannot help saying: If after we are dead there is nothing of all we are told, if we simply sink into a deep, oblivious sleep, what then, friend Romero? And to tell you the truth, think of it as I will, I cannot altogether rid myself of doubts. Frankly, something which is not a shade, not a breath, not a ray of light even, something which is mere nothingness is to survive beyond the grave and we are to go to Heaven or to hell?—Ah! there I stick—nothing will make me believe in hell. Is it possible that you can maintain that there actually is a pit full of fire into which those who have committed little sins are to be thrown? Come, come, I think the Church itself will have to come to a compromise as to this matter of hell-fire, and admit that it is—between ourselves—anything you please. Then, eternal life, Paradise?—In short, the more we think of these things the more we are puzzled, and it is far better to set them aside.”

“Would to God!” exclaimed Don Silvestre

slapping his hard bony hand violently on to his knee. "Would to God I could only remember all I have read in my books; I would answer you point by point on all these questions, and leave you as convinced of the existence of the soul, of hell and of heaven, as of the day-light around us—but I have a wickedly bad memory; I read a thing in the morning and have forgotten it in the afternoon. And then I am so busy; you may suppose that with coming and going to my farm and to the shore I have no time even to open a book. But, Don Rafael, bless me! what opinions you hold! Good heavens! I have only to tell this to the electors and then.—But, on the contrary, everything must be for religion and again for religion. I have played them into that tune, and to that tune they have danced, to a miracle."

"And they shall dance to it again," said Del Horro smiling. "But indeed, Don Silvestre, it seems to me that if we do not soon start to-day we shall come in somewhat late."

"We have time and to spare. To-night we get as far as Villamojada and see our friends there; to-morrow we can go on to Medio-Valle and see our friends there.—It all amounts to that, going from village to village and seeing our friends. Trust me, my friend. In all that concerns Madrid

and heavy politics you may preach and shake your head; but in this part of the world, and in the matter of elections leave it to me, and hold your tongue and be easy. Every animal to his own element."

"I have full confidence in your merit, worthy curé," said Rafael with a mighty slap on the gigantic priest's shoulder.—"Ah! if all my business in this infernal town was half as prosperous and as certain as my election—"

"Ah—you mean with regard to Señorita de Lantigua? What a heavenly morsel!—Well it is your own fault if that fish will not bite—"

"But if Gloria does not like me and seems determined that she never will!"

"Bah! after you are married that will be all right," said the curé. "The mischief lies in your having put the matter in Don Juan's hands, and he with his finessing and rigmarole has risked losing the game. If I were Don Juan I should soon settle the question by saying: 'Now, child, here is a chance to get married and have done with it.'"

"I cannot get it out of my head that Gloria has got some lover already in Ficóbriga," said Rafael hesitatingly.

"The fact is that this girl, in spite of her quick

manner and her eyes that flash fire, is a perfect icicle."

"I do not know—how should I know?" said the young Christian champion, gazing at the ground and letting each word drop slowly. "All I can tell you is that I am in love with her—over head and ears."

Gloria felt that she would rather hear no more and she stole away.

CHAPTER XXII.

GLORIA'S ANSWER.

SHE went into her father's study at the same moment as Don Angel, whose countenance was radiant with satisfaction and who was smoothing each hand alternately with the other, a very common sign of satisfaction in those who have just achieved a good action.

"My dear brother," began his Reverence, "it seems to me that I have not knocked at the door of an empty house—I met with a response."

"Really!" exclaimed Don Juan, putting his last letter into an envelope.

"He began by being much gratified by your

renewed kindness, and he accepts your offered hospitality for a fortnight or a month longer."

"And did you speak to him of religion?" asked Lantigua, passing his tongue over the gummed flap of the envelope.

"Yes, but he avoided the subject with the greatest dexterity; he would not enter on any deep questions of doctrine, and would only speak of generalities—the creation, the goodness of God, forgiveness of injuries—nothing dogmatic."

"He was afraid of betraying himself. This reserve pleases me much, for I cannot bear to hear a heretic flaunt his heresy and put forward commonplace arguments like those in the newspapers."

"I have never heard him utter a vulgar sentiment. But I could draw nothing out of him with regard to the articles of his belief," said the Bishop with some annoyance. "However, one thing I can assure you with perfect certainty and that is—"

"Well, what?" Don Angel brought his chair rather nearer to his brother's.

"That he has a deeply religious mind, a soul full of faith—"

"But what form of faith, that is the question."

"True," said the Bishop hastily correcting himself. "You are right. I will call it a predisposition towards faith, the immediate precursor of the

true faith to which he must come. I might compare the state of that noble soul to a lamp perfectly trimmed, and filled with oil to the top of the wick,—nothing wanting but to apply the light.”

“And is that nothing?”

“Nothing but a match; a breath, a gust, and it will flash into flame. But that which all the efforts of a lifetime can never succeed in is to light an untrimmed lamp.”

“Certainly not.”

“Now Señor Morton,” Don Angel went on, “may be in darkness as regards the true light, but it certainly is not for want of eyes to see. How different he is from so many of the young men of these parts, who call themselves Christians and Catholics and have indeed learnt the true doctrine, but who, by their frivolity and moral corruption, show the vacancy of their minds, darkened souls without faith; the whited sepulchres of which our Lord speaks.”

Gloria went up to her father.

“A pretty state of things in the French Assembly!” Doctor Sedeño suddenly exclaimed from behind his newspaper. “This is the dispersion of the tribes! Oh, France, France! what chastisement is in store for you! Listen your Reverence and you will form some idea of how a

nation sets to work to quit the paths of the true faith."

Don Angel looked at his secretary and at the paper he was reading. Gloria meanwhile laid her hand on her father's shoulder.

"What do you want my child?" said he, affectionately taking her hand. "Ah, you little monkey, now I have got you I shall not let you go without giving you a lecture."

"And what for?"

"Because you have not kept to your bargain. A few days since I spoke to you about a serious matter; you promised to answer me soon and now is the time—"

"Yes papa," said Gloria, "now is the time. I have come to answer you."

Don Juan laid down his pen.

"I answer no," said the girl, smiling, but emphasizing her reply with an eager shake of the head.

"You refuse."

"I refuse—and with all my heart."

"You have thought it well over?"

"I have thought it over and I cannot—cannot anyhow contrive to like—"

"Can you give me any reason?" said Don Juan with an expression of mixed feeling which can only be termed stern benevolence.

"One reason! a thousand!" said Gloria with her usual impulsive exaggeration.

"One will satisfy me. Have you duly considered all the merits of this young man?"

"Yes—and I see him to be a *whited sepulchre*."

"Consider what you are saying."

"Ah, but you yourself will not fail to discover it before long. All is not gold that glitters. But in fact Don Rafael's brilliancy seems to me about on a par with that of a lump of chocolate."

"What a way to speak!" exclaimed Don Juan, not attempting to conceal his vexation. "Do you suppose that you, a chit of a girl, can judge.—But silence, here he comes."

Don Silvestre and Rafael came in and proceeded to kiss the Bishop's ring and enquire after his health; then, for a few minutes, nothing was talked of but their journey.

"Here we have a very interesting document," said Sedeño pointing to another newspaper. "Nothing less than a letter from Ficóbriga, in which is the whole history of the wonderful and unheard-of achievement of Don Silvestre de Romero, in rescuing from the fury of the waves the whole crew of the Plantagenet."

"Show me, show me!" cried the priest in the

greatest excitement and his eyes sparkling with gratified vanity.

"They exalt you to the skies—here, read it yourself," said Sedeño, handing the paper to the tonsured athlete. Romero read with a loud voice and clear utterance a prolix report, with endless details, of the feat of June 23d, and when he ended he said :

"That is not bad, not at all bad."

"Our friend the curé," said the Bishop in a tone of mild reproof, "is over proud of his beneficent action, and puts it before the world with a dramatic and even theatrical boastfulness which deprives it somewhat of its real merit, and mars its simple and apostolic spontaneity."

Don Silvestre, somewhat discomfited, bowed respectfully to his superior—for, if the Bishop could say this merely from seeing the complacency with which Romero had read the praises of his prowess, how he would have lectured him had he known that he had written them himself!

"My friends," said Don Silvestre, "have done their utmost that the world should hear of my manly deed. I have not gone about talking of what I did."

"That is as it ought to be," said his Reverence, offering him his hand. "The memory of a kind-

ness ought to be the pleasing task of the person who has received it. Listen only to Señor Morton. How well the praises of your courage sound from his lips."

"And is Don Daniel about to leave us?" asked Romero.

"No," said the Bishop. "With my brother's permission, I have just invited him to remain a fortnight or even a month longer."

Don Juan, who sat thinking deeply while his daughter still stood by his side, raised his head and said:

"Does it not seem to you that a week might be long enough?"

"As you wish—but I have said a fortnight—"

"Well, well, as you wish," said Don Juan. "The most important thing on hand just now is breakfast. Gloria, that food, for pity's sake. You see these two gentlemen want to be off as soon as possible."

"You can go down at once," she said with a beaming face, while her dark eyes sparkled with pleasure and excitement. "Uncle, gentlemen, Señor Rafael."

At the delightful promise of food Sedeño laid down the printed sheet.

"Is Señor Morton coming down to-day?"

"Yes, to-day for the first time," said his Reverence. "Here he is."

A dark form stood in the doorway. It was Morton, dressed in black, pale, handsome and emaciated, looking like a martyr of the early ages come to life again in the guise of a Levite.

"Well done, my friend. I congratulate you on your strength," said the curé going forward to meet the stranger. The Bishop went out leaning on his stick; Daniel offered him an arm and they went down-stairs first; the others followed, Gloria last of all.



CHAPTER XXIII.

TWO OPINIONS AS TO THE MOST RELIGIOUS COUNTRY IN THE WORLD.

Daniel Morton had recovered but a very small portion of his baggage, which had been heavy; but he had saved his money, which had been in the deck-cabin in charge of the captain. The captain had been to see him the day when the shipwrecked crew had left Ficóbriga, and restored to him the money he had received, deducting a certain sum which Daniel gave him in aid of his fellow-sufferers. He then put himself into communication

with the English consul at the nearest large town—distant about ten miles from Ficóbriga—and soon received two large trunks full of clothes. On the day after his first exercise in the open air Morton was bold enough to trust his person in a rickety old vehicle, which, dignified by the name of the coach, went every day to the chief town of the province, churning up the passengers under pretext of conveying them. But in the evening he returned mounted on a fine black horse.

“I went intending to buy a horse, but without much hope of finding one,” said he as he came up to the gate, where the three Lantiguas had lingered for a while after returning from their evening walk. “However, I was able to obtain this animal, which is not an ideal as to beauty and pace, but which goes, at any rate.”

“It looks to me a magnificent beast, worthy of St. James himself, if only it were white,” said Don Angel.

“I should not have thought you would meet with such a good one hereabouts,” said Don Juan examining the steed. “There are very few good beasts in this part of the country.”

Gloria said nothing.

After putting up his horse Morton came up to the sitting-room.

“Now I have a horse,” said he, “I only need a squire.”

And that same evening he agreed with Roque, the house-servant, that a son of his named Gasparuco and who seemed a steady lad, should serve him as groom.

“It would seem that you are getting quite an affection for our part of the country,” said Don Juan to his visitor. “Shall we keep you here much longer?”

“It is very possible I may remain,” replied Morton.

In the course of a very few days the stranger had made intimate acquaintance with every part of Ficóbriga, and particularly with the Abbey, a curious relic of the XIIth century, which, notwithstanding the neglect from which it had suffered and its dilapidated and ruined condition, had many and great charms for the artist. So also had the dismantled citadel, the old tower or keep which stood up and commanded the Abbey precincts, including the cemetery, and some fine old houses formerly belonging to men of rank, some of which were still well worthy of the attention of strangers. The natives of the town stared sympathetically at the young foreigner, and were free enough in their comments, while several men of

the better class, among them Don Juan Amarillo, struck up a friendship with him.

In the home of the Lantiguas, Morton had gained the affectionate regard of both the brothers by his gentle breeding and agreeable conversation, which revealed a very remarkable intelligence without pedantry, a vein of genuine and deep feeling without a trace of affectation, and perfect familiarity with the usages and manners of the best society.

Don Angel did not let the grass grow before he had fully laid his plans for the high emprise he contemplated, bringing into the field all his resolution as an apostle of the Church and the genuine affection he felt for the stranger. And one day he boldly advanced to the attack and opened the subject.

But, unfortunately for the triumph of our sacred creed, the prelate's holy aspirations were devoid of issue. He sat arguing for hours without leading Morton to betray the smallest desire to enter the pale of the Catholic Church and, to add to the venerable Bishop's deep regret, he could not even discover precisely what the stranger's religious views and tenets were; for Morton always spoke in general terms and eluded all personal enquiry. In these discussions—barren as they were unhap-

pily as to any addition to the true fold of the Church—Don Angel was constantly astonished at the knowledge displayed by his interlocutor of all the sacred books, from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Nor was he ignorant of the more illustrious of the early Fathers, and was perfectly familiar with the religious polemics of the present century and of recent times, with the decrees issued by the See of Rome, the dogmas confirmed by the last Council, and all the more recent perils and persecutions of the Church. But beyond all this erudition, which evidently was the result of a genuine study and love of sacred subjects, the good prelate could extract nothing to the point, and this occasioned him the keenest regret. At last he began to think of giving up the undertaking, reflecting that God would no doubt choose some other means and opportunity for shedding His light on the soul of this heretic.

As to Don Juan, though at first he had listened with keen interest to these religious discussions, he soon gave it up, lest they should take up too much time from the work he had on his own hands. Full of eagerness and zeal he devoted himself without relaxation to reading and literary work, imbibing learning from his books and pouring it out again on foolscap; and his whole soul was so entirely

given up to this occupation, that no mortal power could tear him from his study for four hours every morning and as many more in the evening. His brother would reproach him affectionately for this fevered and excessive toil, which was exhausting his really exceptional powers, irritating his brain and undermining his physical strength, and in fact Don Juan's health was waning day by day. However, he paid no heed to the episcopal admonitions and persisted in living among his books, sucking out their marrow to disgorge it afterwards in writing, in full confidence that his unflagging application would result in one of the greatest works of the present day.

One morning, however, Don Juan was so overdone, his head feeling heavier than lead, that he quitted his room to try whether a conversation with Morton would refresh him. When he reached the foreigner's sitting-room he was surprised to find that Don Angel was not with him, for the polemical discussion was commonly carried on at this hour.

"What!" said Don Juan with a smile, "I see that my worthy brother has been forced to raise the siege."

"His Reverence the Bishop," said Morton, "is so good and so learned that he will certainly take

many a fortress yet. Those he fails to take are no doubt impregnable."

Starting from this point Don Juan ventured to ask him whether his own beliefs, be they what they might, were immutable. Daniel did not hesitate to reply that they were not superficial, articles coldly held as a matter of course, like those of the greater number of Spanish Catholics, but, on the contrary, deep and strong; to which Don Juan replied that he would rather see tenacity and logical persistency even in a false creed, than lukewarm indifference in those who had the happiness to be born to the true faith; and he added that no doubt belief had sadly diminished even in catholic Spain, but that, as the root of the evil lay in revolutionary extravagance and the mischievous influence of foreigners who were envious of the most christian country in the world, there would be an easy remedy in sermons and speeches and in the labors of the Hierarchy, if only they could establish a religious government to support and encourage them.

Morton did not seem altogether to agree in this opinion. Nevertheless, out of politeness to his generous friend, he said that he had all confidence in the regeneration of a country which was so rich in men as virtuous and as illustrious as

Don Angel among its priesthood and Don Juan among its laity.

“I am very well acquainted with the south of Spain,” he said, “and with the capital. I do not know whether the north will prove the same, but there, my dear sir, I must confess that the religious feeling that came under my notice was so perfunctory and lifeless that the Spaniards have disgusted me. Do not be offended at the frankness of my speech. In no country in the world is there less true faith; while in none, on the other hand, is there so much pretension to it. Not only the French and Belgian Catholics, but Protestants of every sect, Jews, nay and Mohammedans, carry their belief into practice with more genuine fervor than the Spaniards. I have seen what goes on in your great cities, which seem to regulate the tone of feeling throughout the country, and I have been astounded at the irreligion of the upper classes. The middle class, with rare exceptions, are simply indifferent. They go through the services of the church but as a matter of routine—out of regard to public opinion, to family feeling, or to tradition, rather than from any genuine belief. The women throw themselves into extravagant devotion, while the men fly from church as much as possible, and the greater number altogether give up the practice

of even the most elementary duties prescribed by Catholic dogma. I do not deny that many attend mass—of course provided it is short—and that there is no lack of pretty girls to be seen as they come out of church—but all this is very easy work, my friend.—Do not you see that this is not enough to entitle them to say: ‘We are the most religious nation on the face of the earth?’”

“No; it is not enough—no,” said Don Juan, sadly and with downcast eyes.

“You yourself know many men, men of mark, good, loyal souls. whom you cannot but regard as virtuous; persons to whom you, as a good Catholic, would not refuse your friendship; persons whom no one avoids or regards with aversion—kind, amiable—”

“I know what you are going to say!” interrupted Don Juan sadly.

“Very well—and these persons—perhaps you know more than a thousand of them—when do you suppose they fulfil the radical and rudimentary duties prescribed to Catholics—confession and penance?”

“Oh! you are right—you are right,” said Lantigua in a tone of sincere lamentation. Out of every hundred, ninety-five do not confess once in twenty years.”

“And the Church,” added Morton, “enjoins confession at least once a year. Thus the strict and impeccable Catholics, those we may call the elect—I am speaking only of the men, my dear sir—think themselves in a state of grace because they fulfil this required duty once a year, forgetting that the Church recommends confession once a month, and that those who do not comply are lax in their faith and in danger of damnation! Ought you not in conscience to regard them as being in peril, if not completely lost?”

“But the injunction, the precept, Señor Morton,” said Don Juan rather stiffly, “only requires once a year.”

“There is another symptom,” continued Daniel, “which I have repeatedly observed. When prayers are being said in a household, the men take themselves off without the women being in the least uneasy about it. I have heard the children innocently ask: ‘Tell me, mamma, why does not papa say his prayers?’ Often the mother has no answer ready; sometimes she says: ‘Papa says his prayers in his own room.’ But in reality his prayers are said in the casino or the billiard-room. In fact most of the women think that, so long as they are devout, it does not matter if their husbands blaspheme. I may add, and I do not think

you will take offence at it, that Spain is not merely the most blasphemous country in the world, but actually *the* land of blasphemy and sacrilege."

"There again you are right," said Lantigua gloomily, "and I acknowledge the irreligion. But you seem to hint that the causes of this serious evil lie in something else than philosophic doubt and the modern spirit of liberty."

"True, for I cannot suppose that these two things can have deprived the lower classes in Spain of their religious beliefs. In other countries we find philosophy more, infinitely more widely diffused than here, and far, far more liberty; and nevertheless the religious spirit is not dead. You talk of revolutions! You have never had one in Spain worthy of the name, my friend. In Spain all your political changes have been mere storms in a tea-cup. Good God! what idea must we form of the religious spirit of a country which can be overthrown by the fifteen or twenty petty political changes which have taken place since 1812? I quite understand that the most vast and securest edifices should be shaken to the ground in an earthquake, but they ought not to crumble down at the vibration produced by a troop of trampling cavalry. Admitting, as we must, that Spain has never gone through any tremendous

cataclysm, we are forced to conclude that the fallen structure was not a very solid one. It was so once, long ago; but at the beginning of the century it was already undermined. Spain is like the contentious woman spoken of by Solomon, while 'through idleness the house droppeth through.'"

"But I cannot admit that we have had no revolutions," said Don Juan. "We have had both superficial and radical changes in the political order.—And then consider the flood of literature, the social revulsion, the tide of presumption, the love of luxury, of money-getting and of materialism which have come to us from other countries."

"I see indeed that many things which are harmless elsewhere here turn to poison," said Daniel. "The moral organism of Spain is as feeble as that of those sickly and hypersensitive beings which die poisoned by a mere baleful odor."

"An odor?"

"Aye, a mere odor; for you have as yet nothing more than that of the vast industrial progress, the luxury, the colossal increase of wealth and all the material refinements of life. Spain, as I see her, cannot exist without sheltering herself within the lantern tower of Catholicism, for fear

anything should touch or contaminate her or any atom of external influence should reach her."

"And what do you prescribe for her?"

"Fresh air," said Morton vehemently, "open air, free exercise under every wind that blows from above or below; freedom to be dragged and buffeted, helped or hindered by all the forces that are abroad. Let her tear off her mendicant's hood, her grave-clothes and winding-sheet, and stand forth in the bracing storms of the century. Spain is like a man who is ill from sheer apprehension, and cannot stir for blisters, plasters, bandages and wraps. Away with all this paraphernalia and the body will recover its tone and vigor."

The discussion had come to a point at which Don Juan, regarding his guest as altogether wrong, began to weary of it.

"You let your imagination run away with your reason," he said, in a good-humored but dictatorial tone.—"In this way you might go so far as to prove that Spain is the least religious country in the world. But, friend Morton, have you not happened to see anything which might tend to prove the contrary?"

"There is absolutely no meaning for me" replied Morton, "in the theatrical display of devotional ceremonials which are political rather than

religious. I think very little of the piety of a people who, as at Madrid, talk a great deal about religion and yet have never known how to raise a single temple worthy—I will not say of God—but of the men who worship in it. In Madrid, a wealthy capital, there are as many theatres as in London, an amphitheatre for bull-fights which is magnificent, superb cafés and shops, promenades and entertainments where art and luxury meet to combine; and there is not a single church that is better than a pig-sty.”

“By Heaven! Señor Morton that is too hard.”

“A little hard I admit,” said Morton laughing, “but not far from the truth. And what is true of Madrid is true of all Spain. The Catholic feeling which during this century has not erected a single religious edifice of average dignity and merit, is so lukewarm throughout that it is not discoverable in any conspicuous or useful issues. The most pious country has sunk to being the most infidel; the most religious country, in which at one time piety was intimately associated with all the noblest aspects of life—with heroic deeds, with the arts, with lordly wealth, even with the conduct of war—has ended by regarding piety as a thing by itself, excluded and apart from everything else.

A man so devout as to cross himself with holy-water as he enters a church, to confess and communicate every week, is regarded in most circles as simply ridiculous."

"Bless me, friend Morton!"

"Señor de Lantigua, forgive me my boldness—I feel it must be said. Answer me with the frankness of a man of honor and a sincere Catholic. Tell me, is there in all Spain a woman capable of giving her heart and her hand to a man who spends three or four hours a day in church, who castigates his sins by scourging, who has his house full of holy-water cups, who puts up a prayer over the most trifling actions of his life, such as going in to a house, going out of it again, sneezing, coughing—what not. A devout man on the pattern accepted by the strictly pious communities of the present day is a purely ridiculous creature—you must confess it. And those nobler spirits who are the sincere and staunch advocates of religion, and call themselves soldiers in the ranks of Christ, take every care in general society to conceal their orthodoxy as far as possible, or rather to forget it, or they run the risk of losing the sympathy and friendship which they have gained by their talents, their position, or their virtues."

“There is something in what you say—but not so much as you think my friend.”

“‘Lookers-on see most of the game.’ Those who always live at home observe less keenly than strangers;” said Morton. “Perhaps I may be mistaken, but at any rate I have expressed my opinion in all sincerity. I believe Spain to be the most irreligious country in the world. And a country like this, where unbelief has wrought such ruin, which has so much to learn, which must make such tremendous efforts only to keep itself alive and to infuse some vigorous blood into the veins now filled with a colorless and innutritious fluid, is not in a position to convert others.”

For a few minutes Don Juan was silent, but at last he said with a certain asperity which was characteristic of the man :

“I do not pretend to maintain that my own country is the most religious in the world. Unhappily there is much truth in part of what you have said ; still, I must believe that if we extended our discussion we should find as bad, or perhaps worse, symptoms of dissolution in any other country which you might quote as a model. We have in Spain an immense number of indifferent or even perverse spirits, but we still preserve intact the treasures of our doctrine and dogma ; we cherish

the seed and a period of divine sunshine and favor may bring it to fruition. In the midst of the torpor and frivolity which we see on all sides Faith dwells pure and intact, untouched and untainted by error; and Faith must triumph, Faith must result in virtue, if not to-day—to-morrow.

“I lament, deeply, the sins and crimes of my country; still, I cannot think that they are as irremediable as death, as the slough which is the fundamental soil of other nations though delusively hidden under a growth of prosperity, and order, of artistic, industrial, and social success. Each nationality has its own characteristic organization. I know not whether God will grant to me to see the day of regeneration; but, I warn you, do not seek that regeneration outside the immutable principles of Catholic morality. From the ruins of society only that can grow again which shall have preserved the germ of that morality, and it is we who cherish it—we Señor Morton, though you fail to detect it.

“Away with all revolutions, small or great, with incendiary ideas which come to us from other countries, where their application is but fallacious and transitory; away with all your preachings of doctrines intrinsically opposed to our indigenous social needs; and then you will see that this nation,

once resuscitated and set on its feet after so many years of catalepsy, will be ready once more to convert all the peoples in the old and the new world; yes, sir, to convert them; because, as sole possessor of the truth she will have the right to speak and to act upon it boldly."

Daniel was on the point of replying when they heard voices in the garden, and mingling with the voices the wailing and crying of children.

"What is that?" exclaimed Lantigua going to the window. "Gloria, Gloria!"

Morton followed him to the window.

"It is nothing," said Don Juan coming away. "It is Caifás' children who have come to ask help for their father—a rascal, an idle vagabond that I am tired of helping."

But his Reverence called up from the garden, "Juan, Juan, come down."

"Let us go," said Don Juan. "My brother has interfered and wants me to go down and take the part of the miserable wretch. He is a miserable creature—but Christian charity, friend Daniel, requires us to forgive and be merciful."

“Just so—since unless Don Juan gets the money Caifás will spend it in drink.”

“And since yesterday he and his children have been begging by the road-side.”

“Ah?” said Don Juan, “That is enough; here charity must step in. Give them something to eat. You may give orders that the children are to have something sent to them every day.”

“Oh, they will come for it!” said Gloria with much glee.

“No, with such a man for their father I will not have them set foot in my house.”

“But, my dear papa—”

“He is a wretch. The children may come.”

“And you shall clothe them at my cost, Gloria,” said His Reverence, “and I will give some to Caifás as well. It is with reference to the unfortunate that it is written: ‘Give and it shall be given unto you.’”

“But giving them money only encourages them in vice,” said Don Juan. “Do not you think so, Señor Morton?”

“Undoubtedly.”

“Come, Juan,” said the Bishop laying his hand on his brother’s shoulder. “At the farthest end of the field by Cortiguerra, close by the corn-

field, there is an empty hut where the goats and sheep used to take shelter in the winter."

"Well, well," said Don Juan smiling benevolently, "I think I know what you are aiming at."

"Yes, papa—well; the hut at Cortiguerra, though it has not much more than half a roof, will be a palace for poor Caifás."

"A perfect palace!" said his Reverence. "Do you know where it is, Señor Morton? Out there, beyond that little hill where you see those five chestnut-trees which the people hereabout call the *Five Commandments*."

Morton looked while the Bishop pointed with his stick.

"Very good, then let him move into the house."

"Good, Juan, well said. Now, children, you may be off; Señorita Gloria will give you something to cover your bodies."

Gloria flew out to announce the good news to the hapless Mundideo, and the children ran after her. When she returned, Don Angel had gone in talking to Sedeño, who was discussing the letters that had just come in, and Don Juan was with the masons who were still repairing the chapel. Morton was alone in the garden; Gloria, finding herself alone with him, had a little qualm of doubtful

feeling: should she stay or withdraw? and when their guest came towards her with the evident purpose of addressing her, she could not help quivering with agitation, as a ray of light does when the water from which it is reflected is stirred.

“Gloria,” said Morton. “How happy are the poor of Ficóbriga!”

“Yes, and why?” asked the girl tremulously.

“Because you care for them.”

“But that wretched Caifás is so miserable—he has the character of being full of vice and evil, and really he is a thoroughly good soul; I could do no less than take his part. And then he is so fond of me; he would go to the stake for me.”

“That I can well believe. Die for you! Ah! Gloria, I would do it gladly.”

“What! what are you saying?” cried the girl greatly troubled.

“That I would die for you.—It is all that is left to me after having loved you.”

“Good God! Daniel—”

“Gloria, how can I tell you so as to make you believe me?” His handsome face was full of grave passion.

“I must go—” cried Gloria suddenly. She saw the eager feeling which glowed in her friend’s

blue eyes, she fathomed the force and depth of that which surged up from the bottom of her own soul, and they terrified her.

"You are going?" said Daniel taking a step towards her.

"I must," she said.

"Not without hearing me say one thing."

"What is that?"

"Gloria, that I love you."

And twice before Morton had told her this—but not in the same words, nor with such burning vehemence as now.

CHAPTER XXV.

ANOTHER.

TWO days after this little scene, and after breakfast, Gloria was very busy in her own room. She had sallied out early to buy cloth and stuff, and now was turning over her own clothes to pick out what might be suitable to clothe Mundideo's destitute children. The Bishop then entered, saying to her, as he showed her a paper roll of money:

"Here little niece this is all I can give you.

These revolutionary times keep us poor Bishops on short commons."

"Oh uncle, how good you are! All this?" cried Gloria, pouring the silver out of the paper in which it had been wrapped. "This is a perfect fortune; with this and what I have, I can get Caifás back his mattresses, part of his clothes and his tools that he may set to work again like an honest man."

"Your plan is excellent; I am sorry I have no more, I have hunted through my exchequer, my child, and turned out my purse and cannot find another coin. Do you not see that I have no ready money? Last winter the poor monks of * * * emptied my money box; hapless creatures! I wish I had had thousands to give them."

"God bless you a thousand times!" exclaimed the girl with pious enthusiasm.

"I am not of your father's opinion," said his Reverence, "that this unfortunate Mundideo should have no money at all. Money is indispensable to all, and if—as you say and I am ready to believe, he is not a reprobate but rather a poor weak creature, it is right that we should help him out of his misery. You must convince him of the necessity of being economical, steady and on his guard."

"It is his wife, his infamous wife who is to blame for all."

"Infamous! nay, do not use such an epithet to any human being without you are very certain of it being deserved," said Don Angel in gentle reproof.

"You are right uncle," said the girl modestly. "But indeed his wife is not good. Every one says she is a good-for-nothing creature."

"And will you send these things and the money to the poor man?"

"I will take them myself."

"And I would go with you, with pleasure. The only real happiness in this world, my child, is that we give to others."

"Well, will you not come?"

"No, I have other things to do. First I must go to prayers and then I have to dispatch the courier to Tresestellas. I must attend to the business of my diocese. Go yourself and enjoy the delightful toil of charity my child. I must stay here."

Not long after Gloria put on her broad hat and set out. She went across the little green and down an alley bordered by fig-trees and brambles, and over a fine large common which spread in front of the house and was intersected by two or three paths. She walked with her eyes fixed on the ground, slowly, stopping at intervals, as if the thoughts

which absorbed her rose up before her from time to time and would not let her pass; and now and then she looked skywards, watching the **cruising clouds of birds, and following them with her eyes in their rapid wheeling till they rose so high as to be mere quivering specks against the vault of blue.** She passed the spot where stood the five chestnuts, quaintly called the *Commandments*; venerable trees and deeply scarred with the pruning of a hundred seasons; for the injuries inflicted by the axe are productive of much blessing—in so far, that is to say, as chestnuts are concerned. Then she crossed a field where the young maize-plants supported the clinging stems of the frail kidney-bean and her feet got entangled in the lazy, crawling gourds and pumpkins. This led to a descent which shut out the view of the house of the Lantiguas, and indeed of all Ficóbriga, excepting the tower. Here three cows were feeding and stood looking at her as she passed, but did not molest her; and then, entering a little clearing in the midst of the brambles, furze and ferns, Gloria found herself in Mundideo's domain.

As she approached the spot she heard him singing: "Mundideo is very cheerful?" said she to herself.

The three children rushed to meet and hail her.

“Señorita Gloria — Señorita Gloria,” they shouted. Caifás came out of the house, which was indeed but a hovel, and seeing that the children’s news was true he flung his hammer into the air, and from his huge mouth, open as round and as wide as a pannier, came a jolly laugh of delight.

“Señorita Gloria! Angel from Heaven! Our Lady of Grace! welcome to my house. Oh! how welcome!” he shouted.

“You seem merry.”

Mundideo, finding laughter inadequate to express his joy, cut a caper in the air.

“All this laughing and capering,” said Gloria gravely, as she seated herself on a stone near the hut, “but ill become a man who is so miserable and who has suffered so much loss and trouble.”

“But if I am not miserable, if I have had no losses, if joy and comfort are being showered down upon me!”

“Come, come, you are out of your wits,” said Gloria opening the bundle of clothes she had been carrying. “See here, if you promise me to be very careful, very steady and industrious, I will help you with a little—” and she showed him the paper containing the silver pieces.

“Money!—And suppose I want for nothing, suppose I am rich.”

"Rich, you!" said Gloria somewhat vexed. "Do not try to laugh at me."

"Laugh at you, you—my angel from Heaven? But what I say is true, Señorita," said Mundideo assuming a business-like air. "You thought all my things and my bedding were in pawn; nothing of the kind—they are here. You thought my tools had been seized; nothing of the kind—I have them all here. You thought I owed money to Don Juan Amarillo; nothing of the kind—here are his receipts for payment of the same."

"You have paid him?"

"Four hundred and thirty-two pesos.* That was what my debt had run up to from a loan of a thousand reals, with the increasing interest it had mounted, mounted—like the smoke of incense that never stops till it has reached the roof and filled the church."

"You are crazy."

"I thought I was crazy yesterday when—"

"You have recovered all your things and settled your affairs?" said Gloria puzzled and astonished. "Explain this miracle."

"That is the very word for it, Señorita, my angel!" exclaimed José with enthusiastic fervor. "A miracle, I always believed in miracles, but I

* The peso is a fraction more than a dollar.

certainly did long to see one and have often said to myself: 'why are there no miracles now-a-days?' Well, Señorita darling, and yesterday I saw a miracle."

"What, have you found a hidden treasure?" said Gloria laughing.

"No, that is not it; the treasure came and found me. God—"

"Do not name God in the same breath with a lottery.—You drew the first prize?"

"I never, never gambled."

"But then—"

"God," repeated Mundideo.

"God! He does not pour money out haphazard on the first comer."

"I thought the same, still you cannot deny that He gives us each day our daily bread."

"I do not deny it."

"Well, He has given me all at once not merely the bread for to-day, the bread for a year, but bread for all my life.—I fell on my knees and I said: Lord thou hast said: 'ask and it shall be given unto you.' Very good—how is that, I ask and ask again and thou givest me nothing—and not ten minutes after I said this, a miracle! a miracle!"

"José, you are deceiving me. Show me Don Juan Amarillo's receipted bond."

Mundideo ran into the house. Sildo and Paquillo had slipped away and Gloria was left alone with little Celinina—a diminutive name for Marcelina.

"Who came here yesterday?" she asked the child, and interpreting her indistinct lisping she gathered.

"A gentleman."

"What was he like?"

"A nice gentleman, pretty gentleman."

"And how did he come?"

"Horse—gee-gee," said the child.

"On a horse? and where from, show me." Celinina lifted her wee hand and with look of pious devotion she said quite distinctly.

"The sky."

Mundideo had brought out the receipts and gave them to Gloria.

"The long and the short of it is you have found a friend, some good soul has come to the rescue."

"Much more than that Señorita, it was a miracle."

"There are no such things as miracles—it was a person, a human being," said Gloria impatiently.

"Now you have to tell me who it was that performed such an act of charity."

The man looked steadily in Gloria's face, but his expression was one of real trouble.

"Well, are you struck dumb? speak."

"I cannot."

"Why not?"

"Because he forbid me. I knew you would be vexed—but I cannot tell you what you want to know."

Gloria thought in silence for awhile.

"I understand," she said at last, "Christ has said: 'Let not thy right hand—'"

"Know what thy left hand doeth," added José. "Ah! every one is not like the Señor Curé, who, when he gives money to the poor, or distributes stale fish, or pulls a bad swimmer out of the sea, sends a rhodomontade history of it all, to all the papers in Madrid."

"Who, who can it have been?" said Gloria in a tone of intense anxiety, and she hugged the parcel she held to her bosom as if she were possessed with an aching desire to clasp some one to her heart.

"I cannot tell you indeed," repeated Mundi-deo looking down.

"And if I guess, and guess right, will you say yes?"

“Well—”

“It was Señor Morton.”

“Ah Señorita Gloria!—why, why did you guess? The stranger, the man off the steam-ship; I do not know his name, but the foreigner who is so like our Saviour.”

“No one can be like the Saviour. Do not utter blasphemy.”

“But his face is like Him and he obeys Him in his deeds—that is true is it not—but, oh Señorita my darling, I have done wrong. He made me swear I would let no one know. Still, you are no one, Señorita Gloria, that is to say you were not meant when he said ‘no one’—because you are an angel, and our Lady of Grace.”

“I will not reveal the secret,” said the girl controlling her agitation which almost stopped her breath. “Tell me, how did he come, when, what did he say to you?”

“He did not say much. He knew all about me; he asked me how much I owed—Ah! how many times have I sung in the choir: ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in’—but Caifás the ugly, Caifás the wicked—little did he think the gates would open before him to let in the King of Glory; and yet I have seen it;

seen, as I may say, the heavens open wide when that man said to me 'take this' and gave me all at once everything I could want."

"He is very rich," said Gloria.

"He must be much richer than Don Juan Amarillo, and nevertheless—when my benefactor, sent to me from Heaven, put out his hand and put the money here, in mine, and closed my fist upon it with his own fingers, I stared at him and thought I was dreaming. I lost my head, and did not even know how to thank him. Then I fell on my knees, and cried and kissed his feet; and he lifted me up and threw his arms round me—why should he do that Señorita!—hugged me, and declared he had done nothing particular or out of the way."

"And neither blamed you for your faults, nor told you to be good for the future?"

"He said: 'You have not meant to do wrong, but you have been unfortunate; be honest and industrious!' Nothing more. I thought God himself had appeared in my house, and when the gentleman had left on his horse, I fell on my knees again."

"And he said nothing more? He did not speak—"

Gloria paused abruptly as if she could not command the words to express herself.

"Of what?"

"Of any one else? Because he might have done so—try and remember; did he say nothing?"—

"Of what?"

"Nothing about—for instance, about me?" She struggled to affect a perfectly simple manner.

"I remember every word he said as distinctly as if I heard them now, and he said nothing, nothing at all about you."

Gloria rose from her seat.

"Although you do not need it," she said, "I brought this for you, and I will leave it with you."

"Although I do not need it, I will keep it as the work of your angelic hands, and I will give it to some one poorer than I am now. Oh! how happy I am, Señorita! If I were ever so wicked, I would turn good now. I am hard at work, and Don Juan shall not repent of having given me this hut, for I am patching it up finely."

Gloria did not stop to look at Mundideo's great works in carpentry: "Good-bye," she said. "Let me embrace you."

"Señorita Gloria! Good Heavens!" exclaimed José drawing back.

"Did not your benefactor, and why not I?" And before Mundideo could prevent her Gloria had clasped him in her arms.

“Now,” she said in an excited voice. “Now you must be honest, sober, and industrious—” and even as she spoke she hurried away from the hut.

As she walked home, she did not see the cows that gazed at her as she passed, nor the waving maize; nor the five chestnuts with their generous load of fruit even in their old age, like patriarchs surrounded by progeny; nor the tower of Ficóbriga as it rose above the slope, nor the clouds of birds that swept across the sky. She saw nothing but the blinding glory of a blazing sun that had risen on her soul, and which, mounting in that wide vault had to-day reached the zenith and flooded it with radiance.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE REBELLIOUS ANGEL.

IN the evening after supper, the meal ‘that refreshes the spirit and inspires love,’ prayers were said as usual in the dining-room, and the weather being fine the door was left open. During this pious act Morton would always go out, but he remained sitting in the garden with his head respectfully uncovered. After this the evening

passed in pleasant conversation; some of the neighbors frequently joining them, and then they separated for the night. Gloria was usually the last to go upstairs, and soon after she had shut and bolted her door, silence reigned throughout the house. Wrapped in the 'trailing garments of the night,' and in calm contentment, it slept the voiceless and tranquil sleep of the just.

But upstairs, in the corner-room, Gloria's thoughts were too busy for sleep, and her wide-open eyes gazed into the darkness. The rush of the fountain, the croaking of the frogs and, from time to time, the wooing whisper of the breeze, filled the girl's brain with a wild and fanciful rhythm which added to the excitement of her imagination. Her right arm she flung over her face, hiding it as a bird hides its head under its wing; and there, alone, with no witness but God, from time to time she opened the doors of her heart to give air to the fire that was consuming it—threw open the floodgates of her soul that her thoughts might overflow as they would. Thus she lay through long hours of the night, at first quiet enough, and then feverish with wakefulness, till towards daybreak sleep sealed her eyes, and her breath came quietly and softly from her little white bed.

One of these nights as she lay with her head under her wing, having put out the light, she said to herself:

“He said to me to-day, ‘I was born under an evil star Gloria, I foresee misfortune. My heart warns me that no good fortune awaits us. Do you feel any confidence?’ And I answered him: ‘Confidence in God’—and how sadly he spoke! ‘Often do men call upon Him and He answers them not; and how many times has He permitted the most devoted love to result in misery through the wickedness of men.’ What could I say. Great God I tremble! I am happy and I am in torment—I hope and I am afraid. I cannot help thinking that I am like the wild flowers in the fields, which are so pretty and so happy, although, as it seems to me, they must always feel tremulous and half-frightened, if only of the crushing-foot of the ox that grazes near—I tremble too, I hear the trampling foot that is to crush me!

“To-day when he went out riding, ah! he was so long gone. I thought he was never coming back, a black cloud seemed to settle down upon me, and crush and darken my life. Then, when I saw him come, when I heard the horse’s hoofs on the stones in the old court-yard, the sun shone on

all the world again; I do not know how it is.—How strange it seems. I remember that at times when I have been very unhappy, when my little brothers died for instance, everything seemed sad. The very trees and sky looked melancholy, the house, Francisca, my father, my room, my clothes—every place was dismal; the garden, the balcony, even the clatter of meals, the chatter of the birds, the magnolia walk and the road, the posts of the telegraph line, the Abbey clock, the clouds, the boats, and my home duties, needle-work and the piano—everything was as sad to me as I was myself, and seemed full of my misery; and now, everything is full of him.

“It is ten days since he told me that—but my heart knew it long before. It is six days since he asked me for an answer—but he knew it, he must have known, for whenever he spoke to me he must have seen all my soul in my eyes. Many days have we stood talking, mere empty words, on my part pure folly; then at last I could pretend no longer, and just as light rushes in at a door when it is opened, the words rushed from my lips and I told him, how could I help it? that I loved him with all my soul, for all my life. I am not ashamed of it—my conscience is easy, God is on my side, I feel it—I am sure of it. I can

see the mighty hand which signs the cross on my heart in token of blessing.

“ ‘Gloria,’ he said, ‘may curses fall upon me and upon my father, if I ever cease to love you. But my heart had known you long, long ago, and when first I saw you it seemed to me, not that I met you, but that I had found you!’ And my heart was waiting for him as for its other self, its brother that had gone away and must return. Never has he said a single word that could vex or disappoint me. Never have I seen him move without feeling more in love with him than ever. His person is perfect, his heart overflowing with kindness that seems inexhaustible; his intelligence is like the sun which illuminates all it falls upon, his whole nature sweet and gentle, his gaiety never offends any one, his speech is always refined.—He loves me; oh! and I adore him.—Well, then, I ask Heaven and earth, God and men: Why should not this man be my husband? Why should we not be united and be one in all the paths of daily life, as we are already in spirit? as we shall always be, and nothing can prevent it. Why indeed? Answer me, why?’”

And as there was none to reply, Gloria answered herself, aloud, as though she were not alone:

“He shall be my husband.”

And another night she spoke aloud:

“Religion! Religion, which exists for none but good ends, which is revealed to us by God, which is the first necessary of our existence and the light of the soul—Religion is to me a fount of utter bitterness. It stands between us as the edge of a dividing sword. No one can thrust it aside—no one can crumble into dust the wall that stands between us, and against which our arms will be broken when we try to join hands forever. For I know my father—he is a rock.

“Curses on Martin Luther and the Reformation, Philip the Second and William of Orange, the Elector of God-knows-where, the peace of Westphalia, the revolution of Heaven-knows-when, the Syllabus—all my father heaped upon me this evening. This it is that has hampered our lives and cut the thread that binds us together, and not God, the creator of hearts and of virtue and love; not God but men, who with their disputes, their quarrels, their hatred and their ambitions have split up creeds and destroyed the work of Christ, and who would have made us all of one mind. I cannot think how any noble mind can endure to read a book of history—a bog of pestilence full of horrors and blood and tears. I would

have everything forgotten and all those books flung into the fire, so that the past should not govern the present, and all these differences in a mere form of words should perish forever. I asked papa: 'Is he not good? Does he break God's laws?' Should I love him as I do if he did? Has he not a noble soul? What makes him different from me? Nothing—nothing but an empty name invented by evil souls to keep up a feud. Ah!—never tell me! Those that love each other are of the same faith. They cannot have separate creeds, and if they have, love will rebaptize them both in the same waters of Jordan. Leave all differences of sects to those who hate each other; if you look at it honestly there are indeed but two religions—that of the good and that of the wicked. All the good belong to Jesus; the wicked may all follow Barrabas. But to suppose that Daniel is not a follower of Christ—that he is not of the religion of the good—impossible! impossible!

"And yet, if I say all this to-morrow by the light of day they will laugh me to scorn. I, O Almighty God! I see it as plainly as daylight, as certainly as that Thou dost exist, as that I myself am alive—and I cannot say it without being thought mad by all the wise-heads."

And as these thoughts rushed through her

She groaned, and her head sank on her breast, and covering her eyes with her hands, she wept over the bitter cup of this experience. There were but two ways open to her: Resignation or Rebellion.

The first rays of dawn, piercing the cracks in the blinds, fell on the graceful and lightly-clad figure of the poor lovelorn child, and with a shudder of cold and of sudden realization she crept back to bed again, and presently fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HE GOES.

ONE morning Don Juan de Lantigua said to his brother:

“Twenty-six days has this stranger been within our gates. You heard what he said last night?”

“Yes—that although he was our grateful friend, his sense of propriety prompted him to ask our leave to depart. He knows very well that we do not wish it, still, he does not want to abuse our hospitality.”

“Although I told him last night that he should

remain a few days longer, I do not think I will press him much. What do you think?"

"I think it as well."

"Indeed, is that so?" said Don Juan ironically. "Are you satisfied with your conquest? These Protestants, my good brother, though they are very quiet about it, are very tenacious of their heresy. There is nothing for it but to leave them alone."

"I do not believe it," said his Reverence. "It is our duty to try to tempt the straying sheep back into the fold—to call them, to run after them. If after all, they will not come—"

"You see how little result your efforts have had."

"How do we know? I have not lost hope. I have spoken and he listened to me. I sowed the Divine word—who can tell that it may not some day germinate."

Don Juan shook his head doubtfully.

"Well, for the present at any rate," said he, "it is as well that he should go. It is in no way fitting that this man should stop any longer in my house. We shall lose a delightful companion, but it is right that he should go. He is not wanting in superficial charm, he has in everything a brilliancy which fascinates and charms his company.

Now I have a daughter who is not a little impressionable—”

“What! you are afraid that Gloria—!”

“Nay, nay, I fear nothing.—How can you imagine that my daughter?—No, there is a great gulf fixed by religion, and before that obstacle I firmly believe that not the good sense merely, but even the inclinations, the feelings of a young girl brought up a good Catholic as she has been, must pause to reflect. It could not be otherwise.—Still, with all that, and although I have the utmost confidence in her, it is well to remove even the most distant probability.”

“I believe you have spoken wisely,” said Don Angel. “For my part I never suspected that what you fear could occur; I could never conceive that with so grave an obstacle as religion, any feeling of love could arise in the mind of a really pious woman.”

“You forget, my dear Angel, that love is a purely human sentiment.”

“And religion a divine one—true; and yet—”

Don Angel stopped in confusion.

“And nothing that is human is impossible,” added Don Juan. “Consequently let us remove the cause.”

“You are right, we shall lose nothing by that.”

After this short colloquy, Don Juan retired as usual to his study, to distract his brain with reading and writing. In the evening he said to his daughter:

"You know that Señor Morton is leaving us. He has just given me a considerable sum of money for the poor of Ficóbriga. You and your uncle and I will distribute it."

Gloria could not find words to reply, and Don Juan observing her efforts to appear unmoved, thought he detected a cloud in the calm sky of his daughter's mind.

"What is the matter?" he said in a tone of surprise and suspicion.

"Nothing," said she. "I was thinking we have not enough poor to share so much money."

"Oh! we shall find them, we have only to seek. And he has given an equal sum for the poor nuns of * * *. You see money is no more to this man than the sand on the shore is to us."

"But he is not like the covetous man in the parable."

"That we cannot know."

"You believe that he cannot be saved?"

"Ask your uncle that," said Don Juan laughing, as Don Angel at that moment entered the room. "Do you hear, Angel, the problem my

daughter sets me ; she asks if Morton can be saved. What is his religion ? I do not believe he has any."

"Saved! saved!" exclaimed the Bishop knitting his brows. "We do not even know exactly what his beliefs are. Saved! Do you think such a question can be answered in two words. It must depend on the ultimate state of his soul. Who can tell what vicissitudes it may go through even in the moment of death! But here is Señor Morton coming out, ready to say good-bye to us."

Morton bowed respectfully to kiss the Bishop's ring ; then he gave his hand to Don Juan and to Gloria. He was evidently moved, which did not surprise the two brothers, for they themselves could not be indifferent at parting with their shipwrecked guest. His horse was waiting at the gate ; he had sent off all his luggage two hours previously with Gasparuco.

"Are you likely to be in these parts again at some future time?" asked Don Juan, once more shaking hands with him.

"Yes, Señor ; I do not think of leaving for England before next month."

"We shall be very glad to see you again," said Don Angel, quite pathetically. "I wish I could see in you anything more than a mere friend—"

“I see in you much more than a mere friend,” interrupted Morton warmly. “I have found you a good counsellor, an admirable shepherd of souls, and a worthy image of the Creator.”

“I have proved but a bad shepherd to you,” said Don Angel sadly. “When I see so precious a soul escape me, I feel that I ought to break my crook and say: ‘Lord my powers are but small and inadequate to extend Thy fold.’”

“Who can mark the boundary line of His fold? Who knows it?” said Morton.

“That is true, very true; and for that reason I hope—I still hope—why should I not speak frankly?” added Don Angel, vexed with himself, “I hope that some day you may become a Catholic.”

“God grant that I may always be a good man,” said Daniel looking down.

He once more took leave of them all, not forgetting Sedeño, and then rode off.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BACK AGAIN.

TO the east of Ficóbriga there is a solitary and deserted pine-wood, close to the sea, and exposed to every wind that blows, so that however light the breeze the waving boughs murmur a low song. While in the heart of the plantation the trees grow close together, towards the outskirts they are thinly scattered, leaving narrow avenues between the trunks, and a few independent groups have wandered from the main crowd, up the mountain side or down towards the shore, as if they had quarrelled with their companions. A rough wall runs through the wood, a tumble-down structure in which stones and weeds are mixed up in confusion, and under the fir-trees grow a dozen rare species of delicate flowers which are not known in any garden; blue gems, which smile among the ferns like specks of blue sky shed in some tempest from the vault of heaven and strewed upon the ground. Nature is alone there, attentive to her own needs, rejoicing in the sylvan calm, while the passer-by fancies he hears an echo of

that still music of which the poet speaks and which in such a spot as this whispers: "Disturb me not."

One evening in July the tangle of ferns was trampled down by a horse, and Daniel Morton, who was riding it, dismounted close to the wall. Nor had he to wait, for not two steps off, faithful and punctual as time itself, stood Gloria. All the sweetness and beauty of the calm and tender evening scene were concentrated in her person, or so it seemed in the eyes of her admiring lover, to whom she was the incarnation of the azure sky, the deep sea with its pathetic harmonies, the fragrant and smiling earth, the frittered shade of the grove with its resinous atmosphere; and the light that danced in between the arching boughs, solemn as a cathedral vault.

Gloria looked cautiously round her on all sides.

"There is no one," said Morton.

"I always feel as if some one must see us," said Gloria. "The day before yesterday as I was going home I met Teresita la Monja, Don Juan Amarillo's wife."

An insect fluttering over the flowers, a spider letting itself down by what seemed an imaginary thread, a sail on the horizon, a sunken rock which, as the waves rolled over it, came into sight and vanished again, like a spy raising his head from

time to time—these were the only witnesses of their presence.

“There is no one,” repeated Morton.

“But there will be some one, sooner or later,” said the girl sadly, “and we shall be expelled from here as we were from the house, and there will be no shore, no grove that will receive us. For the half-dozen times that we have come here we have remained concealed; but shall we continue to do so? Every tree even is full of suspicious eyes that watch us, Daniel.”

“We are both innocent of crime, and yet we live like criminals; we have not broken the laws of God, and yet we hide ourselves like incendiaries who have set fire to a palace. Why, why should this be?”

“Nay, I ask you—Why? O God! is it possible that this is Thy doing?”

“It is not His doing,” said Daniel in a melancholy tone. “We are sinning only against the outcome of this advanced condition of society which, having constituted itself the sole arbiter of all truth, maintains the rules of caste as strictly as in the days of the Philistines and the Amalekites.”

“I was thinking last night that what man has done man may undo,” replied Gloria, gazing with ecstasy at Morton’s delicate and regular face which,

with its tender expression, seemed to have come down from some crucifix. "It cannot be so very difficult; let us think of a plan.—But how strange it seems that, however we may intend the contrary, we always drift into talking of something sad."

"Do you not see it is because we talk about religion? and religion, which is beautiful when it is a bond, is horrible and cruel when it divides."

Morton bent down with his face close to Gloria's and looked into her eyes.

"What are you looking at?" she asked, drawing back a little.

"Into the black mirror of your eyes," said Daniel smiling. "I can see the sea and sky in them. It is exquisite to see how the whole landscape repeats itself in that tiny convexity. When you wink your lashes it vanishes and then it reappears."

"Do not talk such nonsense, but think of what I have said to you," said Gloria. "Stay—you have something in your beard."

"Where? where?" asked Morton putting up his hand.

"Nearer your mouth; it is a tiny gnat that has dropped from the pine-tree—not there, close to your mouth—" and Gloria as she spoke gently

released the insect from her lover's beard; but, as a butterfly is caught in a spider's net, Daniel seized her hand and kissed it frantically.

"Gloria—what would you have us talk about?" he exclaimed. "There is nothing we can say that will not be as gloomy as the thoughts of a man condemned to death—"

"Yes—for we too are condemned to death," she said drawing away her hand. "And what is worse, we die innocent."

"Like those condemned to the galleys," said Morton. "We have borne a mark on our foreheads from our cradles. Nothing in the world can remove it."

"Nothing?—it is not so bad as that," said Gloria. "If we ask strength of God he will show us a way of escape."

"But it will need courage, immense courage, my best-beloved."

"Immense courage! Great Heavens!" exclaimed the girl deeply hurt. "Do not magnify the difficulties instead of smoothing them away. If you have courage, believe me I shall."

"Why do you answer me so? My heart's darling, when there is a great fight to be fought, great sacrifices are involved."

"Yes—a great sacrifice must be made, Daniel,

and one of us must make it. Is it to be you or I?"

Morton, sunk in thought, stood looking at the ground.

"Both of us, dear love," he said at last.

"Both of us," repeated Gloria puzzled. "Now I do not understand you. The question is a very simple one; Daniel, do not complicate it. We are two souls—we love each other—but, alas! though we worship the same God we live by different creeds. Here there is a creed too much."

"True, there is a creed too much, and the point is to eliminate it," said Morton gloomily.

"We must pay that tribute to social laws. What do you think about it?"

"That society is terribly stern and hard, hard to propitiate."

"That is to say," exclaimed Gloria indignantly, "that you see no possible solution. I try to open the door and you are determined to shut it."

Morton sighed and looked up at the sky; in truth he saw no door, not even a closed one, turn which way he might.

"Why do you sigh like that? What ails you?" asked Gloria with the impatient uneasiness of an anxious heart.

"Nothing ails me, sweet; I was only thinking of my hapless fate, worse, far worse than yours."

"Nay, nay—" cried Gloria bursting into tears. "On the contrary, you have convinced me of one thing, one dreadful thing. Daniel, you do not love me as I love you."

"Gloria—my life, my one love, for God's sake do not kill me with unjust reproach!" exclaimed her lover seizing her hands and covering them with kisses. "If you could know what I am suffering, I who have been on the point of denying everything—name, family, the faith and honor of my forefathers—of becoming a renegade for you; I who at this moment hesitate and tremble, torn between the anguish of never possessing you and that of the sacrifice you demand—how should you know? But I have stated it clearly; one of us must renounce the creed we live in."

"Yes."

"And if we were to draw lots it would be mine, is not that what you think?"

"You are a man. The man ought to sacrifice himself for the woman."

"In this sort of question the victim should be the one whose convictions are the least deeply rooted. What are yours?"

"I believe in God Lord of Heaven and earth," exclaimed Gloria, laying her hand on her bosom, and raising her eyes to heaven, full of tears and of an eager light. "I believe in Jesus Christ who died on the cross to save mankind; I believe in the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body, and in everlasting life.—I challenge you to be as explicit as I am. Never have you told me in plain words what your beliefs are."

"But Gloria, your faith is but lukewarm in many of the dogmas prescribed by the Church—you have confessed as much to me."

"It is firm and ardent in all that is vital."

"All is vital—only ask your uncle."

"I see no need to assert my disagreement with certain things."

"Then you are not a good Catholic. It is necessary to believe everything, absolutely. You see—"

"What do I see?"

"That I am more religious than you are, because I believe everything, literally everything that my religion teaches me."

"That is to say," cried Gloria almost choked with grief, "that I am to make the sacrifice!"

Morton did not answer.

"That is to say," he at last said, "that we shall die Gloria—that we must die and that God will do

for us in the next world what it is impossible to do in this; for this world my love—my heart's desire—is not for us."

Gloria rose from the stony seat they were sitting on, and with an impulse of inspiration as sublime as that of the martyr who sets forth on the way to the stake, she exclaimed:

"Farewell!"

Morton, seizing her by the fingers of both hands, drew her towards him, and she sank back into her seat.

"The sacrifice will not be of one, but of both at once," said Daniel.

"Jesus Christ who died on the cross," murmured Gloria, "Christ whom I love and worship, has shown me that I can do it, myself alone if it is right; but, though He will give me the strength to sacrifice my life's happiness, He will not give me the strength to drink the cup of a base change of religion that I may marry to the disgust of my family. Oh! merciful God! happy are the lands where religion is a matter of conscience and not of words, where it is not a false law of caste and honor. Here we go about like cattle branded with hot iron. If there must be slavery in everything else, good God, our hearts at least ought to be free!"

And, her fiery protest ended, Gloria rose once more and repeated :

“Farewell—good-bye forever.”

“You have spoken the fatal word,” said Morton bitterly. “The word which, as it seems, is the only possible solution. Good-bye; there is no other formula Gloria, even in such a moment as this. It was burnt into my soul, but I could not, could not say it. It is you who have said it.”

“Because you have snatched from me my very last hope.”

“Yes, for there is no issue from our miserable dead-lock; it is impossible; there is no remedy and it cannot ever be otherwise.”

“So be it, then,” said Gloria in the deepest dejection.

“God requires it of us.”

“We must part forever.”

“To-morrow?”

“No, now, to-day, here,” cried the girl passionately.

“Oh, Gloria, the sacrifice I ask is nothing in comparison with this!” cried Daniel. “Noble and beautiful soul! But if, as you say, we are parting forever, grant me a few minutes longer to see you in. Think of my loneliness, a desolation like that of the sea which is ever thrown back on itself, on

its own infinite vacancy with none even to see it. Gloria, my life, light and sunshine of my eyes, listen to me; do not leave me so. If when you have vanished from my gaze you leave me with the faintest suspicion that I may have offended you I cannot bear it—" Gloria moved away.

"Stay, listen, look!" cried Morton holding her back. "My faith is perfect in the God who made Heaven and earth—who made you. I call Him to witness that I worship you, that my lips have never uttered an assertion that was not true, and that I love you perfectly and that never, so long as I live can any other love take possession of my soul, nor can my memory ever hold any thought so sacred as that of you."

Gloria felt Morton's hands tremble as they held hers, his breath was on her face and she almost felt the fire of his gaze; the poor child writhed and moaned like straw consumed in the flames. Her heart was failing her.

"Gloria," he went on in the tone of one who calls but expects no answer: "Gloria I shall suffer for the rest of my life from a load of remorse if I do not now confess to you that I am a wretch; a wretch, for I ought not to love you and I do, I ought not to have looked at you and I have dared to do so. Your eyes, your grace, your beauty, your sweet-

ness and your goodness enslaved me—forgetting the horrible decree that parts us I dared to remain near you. I know that it was my duty to fly from you, to fly before the evil was past remedy. But I was weak; I saw that you loved me and your spirit held mine in chains. I must have been little less than superhuman not to yield to the temptation. You have seen how I failed; instead of leaving your house in time, I remained in it; then I fancied some special interposition of mercy would remove the obstacles, but time went on, and each day they were more appalling and more immovable. The time came when I must fall to the basest level or pause and recover my balance, and you have set me the example. You were sublime, you have done what I, a miserable wretch, could not do. How miserable am I, to have seen what happiness might be and not to grasp it. You return to your home, to your faith, pure, supreme.—But for God's sake, Gloria do you not see, can you not perceive that my honor towards you was untainted?"

"Yes," was all Gloria could say amid sobs of anguish.

"Have you any shadow of suspicion of the purity of my intentions?"

"No."

"Would you feel me worthy of you if a disastrous fatality of birth did not stand between us?"

"Yes."

"Then now," said her lover, standing up resolutely, "let us part."

"Forever," said Gloria rising too. She stood pale and dignified in her sorrow, like the angel of death come to bear away a soul. Daniel clasped her in his arms, and she hid her face on his breast, weeping passionately for some minutes.

"Give me a token to remember you by," said Morton.

"A faithful memory needs no token for remembrance."

"True, I shall not need it; but if then, when you are gone, there will be something of you left to me. Give me something if it is only a hair."

Gloria put up her hand to disengage a lock of hair, and smiling in the midst of her sorrow, with that vague sense of humor which sometimes dashes grief, she said: "But I have no scissors."

"That does not matter," said Morton. "I will divide it," and in a moment with his teeth he had cut off the hair.

"It is nearly dark."

"To me it is always dark," murmured Morton.

They separated a few paces but turned to meet

again—like the wave and the strand which seem ever parting, and are always in a close embrace. But at last, as night was falling on the distant hills, a horseman was to be seen riding inland, slowly and with his head sunk on his breast. The sombre figure disturbed the harmony of the smiling landscape which, as soon as he had passed, seemed to recover its brightness.

Gloria walked back to Ficóbriga, bearing the burden of her despair like a disciple of Christ to whom He has said: "Take up thy cross and follow me." Everything around her breathed of peace and rural repose; the oxen waded 'slowly o'er the lea,' from their labor, deliberately, step by step, and slowly nodding their massive heads and noble, solemn faces. The women of the village came out in the opposite direction, carrying on their heads large loaves more than half a yard across, and the fishermen spread their wet nets to dry on the slope up to the Abbey, sparkling with the scales of sardines that had caught in the meshes, as if they were spangled with silver.

Gloria saw it all; and it all was shrouded in the funereal gloom that enveloped her soul.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IT IS ALL OVER.

NEXT morning, very early, the shutters of Gloria's room were thrown open, and day was admitted as soon as it dawned. The girl gazed out wistfully over the town and distant country, and as her eye fell on the trees in the cemetery, she said to herself:

"Ah, little brothers! now I have you alone to love!"

The high-road passed not far from her window, and along it ran the telegraph wires, while the posts stood in a long perspective at equal distances, as if they were marching on with measured strides. On the wires sat a row of birds which settled there every morning, finding this almost invisible perch in mid-air highly convenient, and thence they seemed to look down on the open window, where Gloria had appeared at so early an hour to greet the day and lift up her thoughts to the Creator.

She did not think that the pretty fluttering creatures were the souls of her brothers and of

other children, for she was incapable of such a superstition, but she vaguely associated them with two innocent creatures that had been carried away by Caifás in their little blue coffins; and day after day she would lovingly watch the birds perched on the wires, and miss them when the rain kept them away. This association had no doubt originated in the circumstance that there was above the cemetery a dense clump of trees, which seemed to be the head-quarters of the birds of the neighborhood. Gloria saw them fly out in clouds as evening fell, making a great fuss and noise, till by-and-by they fell asleep, silence reigned among the feathered population, and the cemetery was voiceless again.

But this morning everything she saw was dipped in gloom. If a black light were possible, the sun would have been black to her, and this, which is a contradiction in words, was not one in her ideas, for all creation was darkened by the pall that wrapped her soul. Instead of smiling at the birds which, as usual, were watching her from the wires, a vision floated before her of her two dead brothers, as she had seen them in their blue coffins the day when they were buried, as pale as wax, the flowers in their wreaths as fresh as their cheeks were faded, dressed in little white robes carefully pleated

and tied, and she seemed to see them come dancing towards her with their eyes open, the elder leading the younger by the hand, while, pointing to the earth, they said:

“There alone is peace.”

Then her eyes fell on the church-tower, and she felt a sudden spasm of terror and aversion. The tower was a concrete idea, and her spirit, at once exalted and wearied with grief, recoiled from it as a blind bird might that had inadvertently flown against a wall. Suddenly a voice called up from the garden:

“Gloria, are you not coming down? I will wait for a minute for you to go to church with me.”

It was Don Angel going out to celebrate mass at the Abbey church. Gloria always went with him and enjoyed it; but to-day her heart was cold and she felt a strange, dumb impulse of rebellion. However, she submissively joined the affectionate and kindly prelate, but when she got into the church she was seized with a chill of horror, and the very stones of the building, with their barbarous coat of whitewash, seemed to weigh upon her soul and choke her breath.

When Don Angel came out and went up to the altar, Gloria summoned all her strength of

mind, all her fervor of faith—and not in vain, for Don Angel was in truth a saintly man and impious recalcitrancy was impossible in his presence. The agitated girl struggled resolutely with the agonizing repugnance that surged up in her soul, not strong as yet, but growing every instant like snakes just hatched; as she saw the Host raised in her uncle's venerable hands, a flood of feeling rushed up in her heart, swelling till it seemed to drown her faculties in its torrent, and Gloria broke into tears saying to herself: "Lord—Saviour! I, too, shall be able to suffer and die."

Don Juan de Lantigua, who could observe keenly when he cared to observe, and who for some days had relaxed somewhat in his literary labors, perceived that something was happening to his daughter. He reflected on the matter for a time, and as uncertainty is the twin-sister of suspicion, he could not help coming to certain more or less rash conclusions; without, however, doubting the young girl's virtue, for this, to the honor of both be it said, never entered his head. His suspicions and guesses all took a very different direction, and he consulted his brother on the subject.

"Gloria is not happy," said Don Juan one morning entering his brother's room. "There is something on her mind. I have noticed certain phrases in her speech, and certain reservations, which indicate a painful ferment in her religious views. She has a powerful imagination and her understanding, which is somewhat inclined to break loose from all guidance, is capable of being misled into serious error. Besides I am not without fears as to her excitability of temperament."

At this moment Gloria came in.

"My child," said her father. "In former years you have joined the faithful in receiving the Body of the Lord on St. James' day. It is some time since you have availed yourself of this privilege."

"Not since Easter," said Gloria turning pale, like a criminal conscious of his helplessness before the judge.

"Oh! that is a long, very long time," said his Reverence, kindly reproachful, and letting both his hands fall on the arms of his chair.

"Why not confess then, to-day or to-morrow?" continued Don Juan with affected indifference, "so as to be prepared to communicate on St. James' day. It strikes me that I ought myself to do the same, and I will confess this evening."

"But my father confessor, Padre Poquito, is not in Ficóbriga just now," said Gloria.

"What does that matter, silly child? You used to confess to your uncle."

"Yes—when I was a child."

"And why not now?"

"Come to me my little lamb," said Don Angel with a loving smile. "You are shy? With all the tremendous sins you must have upon your conscience no wonder—"

"I will leave you," said Don Juan, as his brother affectionately extended his arm to draw his penitent towards him with a gesture of paternal tenderness. Gloria could not say a word. Her presence of mind had deserted her; she fell on her knees half-fainting with the stress of the moment, and Don Angel put his arm round her neck saying:

"Now let us see my daughter."

The rest is silence. A soul is being laid bare; and confronted with this solemn rite, the most touching in any religion, the narrator must lay down his pen. No one has the right to intrude on this revelation of a soul to its God.

CHAPTER XXX.

A SINNER AND A HERETIC.

SHE confessed it all, absolutely all; she searched her conscience to the remotest depths; and as she poured out her confession, she began to breathe more freely, for in truth her burden had been heavy to bear. And the indiscreet listener who should have intruded on her confession, which was a long one, would have heard it broken by sighs and sobs, and the soothing words of the worthy Bishop.

When she ended Don Angel was greatly perturbed. His kindly countenance, which, as an admiring friend once said of it, was a pledge of Paradise in its sweet benevolence, had assumed a kind of irresolute severity, a shade of surprised disappointment—as if some beautiful object had been suddenly eclipsed before his eyes without his being able to interpose, or even to feel annoyed at its disappearance. Don Angel felt as Tobias might when he saw the angel vanish that had so long borne him company. After a short interval

of prayer, which he enjoined Gloria to employ in the same way, he said in very sad tones :

“ My daughter I cannot absolve you.”

Gloria bowed in submission.

“ For the present, my child,” added he, “ you must recover yourself, rest and compose yourself. We will go into the garden for a short time, or take a walk and talk at leisure.” Gloria ran to fetch her uncle’s hat and stick.

“ One thing is quite clear,” said the Bishop. “ I do not at all approve that your father should remain in ignorance of this matter. I cannot say a word to him without your permission. Unless you authorize me, I am as ignorant of it as if I had never taken your confession.”

“ But I wish that he should know it,” said Gloria. “ My confession is to you both.”

“ Quite right ; that I think quite right.—Are you not suffocated—let us go into the air.”

The two went out, beyond the garden, walking towards Pesqueruela, and the prelate began again :

“ I told you I could not give you absolution, and now I will tell you why. It is not your having loved this man that is the cause of my severity in the matter. You are a girl, a woman—and by the natural laws of life at your age a feeling is born in your heart, a liking for some fellow human

creature, which when it is virtuously and wisely directed, may result in much good and conduce to the glory of God. It is true that I detect in the flame which is consuming you an excess of eagerness and passion, and it is of a nature which gives it rather the character of the torment of a wounded soul, sick and borne down with grief, as St. Augustine hath it, than of a sweet human affection. But at the same time your having kept your love a secret is highly reprehensible. These surreptitious meetings are highly unbecoming in a modest and well-educated girl. That which has to be hidden cannot be right and good. Still, this sin, great as it is—so great that I should never have thought you capable of it—” The good man paused, his voice broken by emotion; but controlling himself he went on: “Great as your sin is, it is not unpardonable, particularly if you are honestly prepared, as you say you are, to bury and extinguish this insensate fire, quenching it in a steady and fervent aspiration after the one sovereign love, which is the love of God. And in order that you may see how wide my tolerance can be I will even forgive your having chosen as the object of your passion a man who lives beyond the pale of our holy Church; for in truth your wound ought to close at once, if you cut off your own soul from

all communication with that of a heretic. And, while I fully acknowledge the evident attractions of Daniel Morton's mental qualities, for I esteem him highly, I cannot but wonder that you could find any real and permanent charm of love in a man who lacks the first and chiefest grace—that is, the Catholic faith. However, you have declared your firm resolve to renounce this love with its sinister fever, and that at your tender age is so truly meritorious, that it cannot fail to secure my indulgence. So far all is well, my daughter; but here begins our disagreement, and I shall set it clearly before you."

Gloria listened with eager attention.

"The real cause of my dissatisfaction is that, as you have confessed to me, certain erroneous ideas totally and utterly contrary to all Christian doctrine and to the dogmas of the Church, have clouded your soul, just as earth-born vapors obscure the brightness of the sun. The mischief is not merely that you have been tainted with these errors—since the enemy, who is always watchful for a weak moment when he may distil the poison of false counsel into the ears of men, might take your soul by surprise and inoculate it with the plague. All men are subject to these attacks of the foe, even the strongest; but then there

comes a healthy reaction, the path is clearly discerned, grace returns with power to the erring soul and evil flies howling, like the devils cast out of one possessed. Now you have not enjoyed this purging of your understanding; you cling to your errors and are in love with them, as you have told me. You keep them stamped upon your heart like the degrading inscription the Jews nailed to the cross, and instead of tearing them out and casting them into the fire, you cherish and cling to them. Is it not so?"

"Yes, Father," said Gloria humbly and respectfully, but with clear determination.

"Well then, you are infected by a disease which is too common in our time, a perilous taint, and all the more so because it gives a specious coloring of generosity to much that is baleful. This is latitudinarianism. You say: 'Men may find the road of everlasting salvation and win celestial glory in any creed they sincerely follow.' But I tell you no; this theory is controverted and condemned by the Supreme Pontiff in his Encyclicals, '*Qui pluribus*' and '*Singulari quadam*.' You say 'every man is free to embrace and profess that form of religion which, guided by the light of his reason, he regards as the true one.'

But this proposition is likewise condemned. What do you say to that?"

His Reverence stopped in his walk and turned face to face with his niece. "I will explain all these subtle points to you calmly and at length," continued the Bishop. "And we will talk it all out, for I cannot sleep in peace while the least trace of this poison remains in your mind. But tell me, my darling child, how could you ever let your understanding harbor these accursed vipers? It was no doubt the man whom you have been so unfortunate as to love, who inculcated these principles of latitudinarianism, which are so sadly prevalent in the world, from the very fact that they seem to be so full of generosity and liberality."

"It was not he," said the penitent with eager emotion, "who gave me these ideas; Daniel, though he never let me clearly see what his religious beliefs are, always seemed very free from what you call latitudinarianism. On the contrary, his beliefs seem very deeply rooted and almost intolerant. Besides, Sir, he was always too delicate to say a word to me that could shake my adherence to the religion of my fathers. We discussed religion as a social bond and nothing else."

"Then it was yourself.—But stop, I am rather

tired, and it would be as well that we should sit down a little while on this stone."

"I and I alone," cried Gloria seating herself by his side, "am guilty of these ideas. For some time since I have known him, I have worried myself with such thoughts, night and day. I could not get them out of my mind and, so far as my comprehension allowed, I have thought them out thoroughly. It seemed to me that my arguments admitted of no answer, and I was proud of them, putting them forward very confidently in my dialogues with myself."

"But you say 'since you have known him,' he is then in sort responsible."

"No, no, my dear uncle, no one is but myself. And, to speak to you with the most perfect frankness, and show you my soul to its inmost depths, even before I ever knew him I had thought of these terrible things, though I had given my thoughts no definite form. In talking with Morton light seemed to flash upon my mind from a thousand sides at once, and by that light I began to see different aspects of religion, of the religious disputes of men, and also of the greatness and the infinite sweetness of the reign of Christ, in whom I saw the Saviour of all nations, of all who are good, of all the pure in heart."

Don Angel frowned.

"I see," he said with some severity, "that your disease is spreading. Oh! when your father knows this! he, who by his orthodox studies and the lucidity with which he has been able to disentangle truth from error, in the abominable strife of these days, has triumphed—"

"But you and my father will certainly be able to convince me," said Gloria with all humility.

"To convince you! and you say it as if it were a task of time? So that you intrench yourself in your error, and shut yourself up inside a wall of obstinacy and disputatiousness which are worse than the errors themselves. Gloria, Gloria my child, for God's sake, consider your own state of mind. You see, I cannot absolve you if you do not give up these opinions, if you do not tear them out of your heart with horror, as you would fling from you some noxious creature that might sting you."

"There can be no greater torment to me," said Gloria, "than the feeling that I am separated from you and from my father by so slight, so small a thing as a thought, an opinion which may change at any hour. Still, if at this moment I were to say to you: 'Uncle, I have torn out the baleful monster, I am freed from error,' I should

“speak only from my lips and not from my heart, for the ideas I have pleaded guilty to will not go out of my head simply because I say ‘go!’ They are so firmly rooted, that I cannot snatch them out. And when I appeal to my faith in Christ, it answers me nothing against them.”

“Gloria, child—for mercy’s sake!”

“And would it not be worse than the error itself, if I were to recant with my lips, while I lacked the inner strength to crush it?”

“Of course. But are you gone mad, child? Have you lost the gifts of Divine Grace and the Holy Spirit?”

“My dear, good uncle, I do not know what I have lost; all I know is that it would be very difficult to convince me that the ideas you disapprove of are anything but true. I do not want to be false, I do not want to be a hypocrite; I have opened my soul to the inmost core that you may see and read it. I can do no more, I cannot do violence to my conscience—”

“So that in short, to you authority counts for nothing! You are going on from heresy to heresy!” exclaimed Don Angel thoroughly horrified.

“Indeed,” said Gloria, “if I am in error, if I am tainted with heresy, I declare solemnly that I do not wish to be; and that I will do all I can to

purge myself of it; but my dearly beloved uncle and Father, I dare not lie, I dare not affect a submission I do not feel, I dare not subscribe to a belief in certain things which I do not believe; it is not a mere vain caprice which forces me to think as I do, but an overwhelming force, a flame which is as fierce as it is undying."

"So that you are in fact a rebel—a rebel! For the love of God, Gloria, think what you are doing!" cried his Reverence in extreme anguish of mind.

"Uncle, uncle, if I lose your love I feel as if hell were indeed open before me," cried Gloria bursting into tears.

"You will lose it, you will lose that and everything;" said Don Angel with increasing severity. "Things cannot go on like this. You authorize me to speak to your father?"

"I have already told you so."

"Then let us go in," said the prelate rising.

They spoke no more. As they went, Don Angel came to the conclusion that pious exercises combined with a salutary regimen of abnegation and of delicate exhortation, such as might befit the sensitive soul of his niece, a certain course of seclusion and frequent association with holy scenes, might cure the leprosy which had tainted the girl's pure and lofty mind. While she, walking towards

home, absorbed in thought and grief, still heard in her inward ear the fateful voice, which again and again broke in upon her sorrowful meditations, saying :

“Rebel, rebel. Your intelligence is your strength. Rise, assert yourself; purge your eyes of the dust which darkens them, and look at truth face to face.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

A PAUSE.

UNHAPPILY—or happily—this is not the time and place to discuss and decide which—every hour carried Gloria more surely and swiftly on the wings of her latitudinarianism, which was to take her to God-knows-what abyss of horror.

After much meditation, Don Angel determined on not speaking to his brother of Gloria's fatal passion for the stranger. It was already a thing of the past and finally set aside, and now the sooner it was forgotten the better. At the same time he thought it wise to warn him of the errors she had fallen into, since if they were not at once attacked, they would grow and flourish like evil weeds.

It need not be said that Don Juan felt very serious anxiety on hearing of the precipitous and devious paths by which his daughter's mind had risked such a perilous descent; still, recalling the audacious ideas put forward by Gloria many years since, he perceived that the disease was of old standing and had only taken a new form. It embittered life to him at the time, and all he could think of was to devise palliatives and compose moral discourses which might reclaim his adored child, and make her once more the simple catholic believer she had formerly been. He could not, or course, guess what had occurred with regard to Morton; still, at the bottom of his soul he had a vague suspicion. Without conceiving that his daughter had actually loved Morton, he could understand that the man's delightful manner and brilliant accomplishments might have had some influence on Gloria's heterodox affectations, and he now deplored more than ever the disastrous wreck of the Plantagenet.

The two brothers lost no time in laying a complete siege, in the form of advice, admonition, and exhortation. The Bishop tried to lead her back with gentleness, the layman with wrath and severity; but these attacks produced no positive results, or, to speak more accurately, the results were adverse

to the admirable intentions of the two Lantiguas and the glory and triumph of the Church.

On the very day when she had confessed, Gloria went on from one heretical proposition to another, and one devil after another seemed to struggle for possession of her soul; from latitudinarianism she was advancing to rationalism and other pestilential notions.

However, there came a point at which the tender devotion of the three to each other had some effect in shaking her firmness, for the hapless girl's affections rose superior to every consideration. To lose the love of her father and her uncle seemed to her an irreparable misfortune, and she resolved that she would force herself to forget her errors since she could not extirpate them. Next day, when Don Angel was admonishing her in the presence of her father, she ended by exclaiming:

“Oh, my dear, kind Father! Who could resist your authority and goodness? I yield; I am conquered; I will believe all that our Holy Mother Church bids me believe.”

She had yielded; still, at the bottom of her soul would lurk these latitudinarian ideas, which were so utterly condemned by all established authority; lurked and lived on, like some perennial plant which preserves through each winter

the possibilities of a resurrection and summer bloom. Gloria did as nine-tenths of the world do, kept her heterodoxy to herself, in order not to distress the elders. Whence it resulted that, like the majority, she was a true Catholic for the rest of the world and *latitudinarian* for herself.

Don Juan now returned with increased energy to his labors, and the Bishop, though more slowly, recovered his peace of mind, satisfied that he had saved the soul of his niece from a fearful peril. His love for Gloria was in no way diminished by her aberrations; it was only mingled with a certain tender compassion. This admirable man, who desired above all things to solve every difficulty by his own angelic goodness, left them all unsolved; a not uncommon case in the world, though in less illustrious persons. He had hoped to convert a heretic, and his pious attempt had failed of effect. He had hoped too to disabuse the noble mind of his niece of a base error, and his success was but apparent. The worthy prelate's goodness of heart and purpose were patent to all; but, in spite of him, heresy and error held their own, and marched undeviatingly onward to the goal set them by laws that are immutable.

When events combine to tend in a fixed direction, it is vain to try to evade it. And on the occa-

sion in question we shall see that, in spite of the apparent serenity of the atmosphere, the storm is only in abeyance, and not past; the torrent that is frozen over for a time will break forth again and rush on to its appointed end. How strangely events are linked! How mysteriously do minor incidents involve a sequel of more important ones; how surely does Fate spin a thread out of natural consequences and the natural logic of things. The struggle at Ficóbriga was only suspended; the contending forces had paused for breath, to return to the charge with increased vigor, just as a man in a rage pauses in his speech and steadies his arm before delivering his blow. This delusive pause was, so to speak, the moment of suspense between the flash and the thunder-clap—which is only apparent and a result of the different transmission of light and sound, while in reality they are simultaneous.

We have seen the lightning, and inevitably must presently hear the thunder. We are apt to say that events follow their fated course. But shall we call it fatality or logic? How hard to decide! The logic of events then, works itself out, and neither the goodness of the good nor the wickedness of the perverse can give it pause.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE VOTE-HUNTERS.

IT was the eve of St. James' day, and it was not yet nine in the morning, when a great clamor and outcry were to be heard in the house of the Lantiguas. Don Juan rushed out of his study thinking there was a mutiny in the household, but he was reassured when he saw that this commotion was the work of Don Silvestre, who was shouting as loud as he could :

"We are winning the elections! we are winning the elections!" while his coarse and powerful features, like those of a Roman emperor, were radiant with triumph and delight.

With Romero was his friend Rafael del Horro, the victorious candidate, his satisfaction shining in his eyes. Hardly had Don Juan embraced the pair, when they began to relate all the amusing and lucky chances of the contest, which the curé spiced with no end of ingenious allusions and jokes, till they half died of laughing.

"If it were not so costly, immoral and demoralizing," said del Horro, throwing off his travelling-

cloak, "the parliamentary game is a thing that ought to be kept up."

Presently came Dr. Sedeño, who had been celebrating mass, and then came congratulations and compliments. In a few words Sedeño informed them of all that had appeared in the local prints during the prolonged absence of the two friends, and they in return gave a wonderful account of the votes, and a history of various protests, thrashings, frays, black eyes, etc., that had varied the proceedings.

It was not long before Don Angel made his appearance.

"You have been absent a long time from your flock, wandering shepherd," said he good-humor-
edly to the curé.

"The flock is being guarded equally well, Illustrious Señor, whether we are pursuing the wolves or toiling to keep those rascally sheep out of mischief."

"Equally well, no doubt," said the Bishop; "that I do not deny; still we are not hunters, but shepherds. It is all very well for once, however—indeed I know it was necessary, absolutely necessary. In emergencies like these we are shepherds who, whether we like it or not, have to take up the cudgels."

“Ay! or the bludgeon or the knife or whatever happens to be handy; we or they must win,” vociferated Don Silvestre.

“And it is but fair,” said Don Juan looking at his brother, “that we should use the same arms as they use against us. If only our own lives were in question we might die, but the Church is in our hands and we cannot abandon it.”

Thus spoke the lawyer, the layman, in a tone of indisputable authority, while the priest, the apostle, sat silent and accepted his dictum with passive good-humor. One represented the idea, the other its active impersonation, one took the initiative, the other bestowed a blessing.

For some little time, Don Juan's study was the scene of a storm of projects, reports, and invectives, of religious motives mixed up with worldly ambitions; but at last Don Angel and Rafael went into the drawing-room where Gloria received them. The successful young man laid himself out with conspicuous fatuity to lead the conversation up to the interesting subject of his triumph; but Gloria, whose light shone in a supreme atmosphere, was too far above him to be dazzled by the light of a lucifer-match.

As he listened to their conversation, Don Angel's soul was filled with deep regret, knowing, as

he did, two facts which he deemed equally deplorable: first, the scorn the child had conceived for the graces and virtues of 'the soldier of Christ,' and then her reprobate love for an impious foreigner. Still, with due reverence for the purposes of God, he dropped his eyelids in silent prayer, while folding his hands with the fingers interlaced, he twirled his thumbs uneasily.

"It is a dispensation of God," thought he to himself.

Presently Romero also came down to pay his respects to the young lady of the house.

"I have a complaint to address to you, Señor Curé," said Gloria, after she had heard him sing his own praises of his recent exploits.

"And what is that my daughter? A complaint—of me?"

"What made you turn that poor Caifás out of the sacristy? Is it not a pity?"

"Ah! the vagabond, the drunkard! Still, he has nothing to complain of since, from what I hear, he has become a wealthy man—"

"Ah, yes,"—murmured Gloria in some confusion.

"On my return to Ficóbriga, I was informed that Mundideo had paid all his debts and recovered all his property—in short that he is rich."

"My niece and I," said his Reverence, "have given him some little assistance, but not so much as that. Unless the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes—"

"There has in fact been a miracle wrought," interrupted the curé, "or else there has been a robbery committed. Oh! he is a very sharp fellow, is this Caifás."

"Señor Curé how can you!" exclaimed Gloria indignantly.

"Nay, do you doubt my word? Where and how could Caifás get so much money?"

"Supposing some one had given it him."

"Oh, I daresay—that is what he says. Indeed he unblushingly declares it was given him by Daniel Morton."

"And it is true."

"I do not believe it. Don Juan Amarillo, who understands such matters very well, tells me he is very uneasy about it. He counted his money and found that it was exact, nevertheless he could not divest himself of certain suspicions—"

"Yes indeed," said Don Juan, who had come in. "All Ficóbriga is talking of the wealth of Caifás, and it seems he is repairing the house. Well, so much the better for me."

"In my opinion," said the curé, "we ought not

to rest till we have investigated this matter thoroughly. Indeed the judicial authorities have already determined to interfere."

"And why? It is iniquitous!" exclaimed Gloria vehemently. "It ought not to be allowed—we will not allow it."

"Now my daughter is in her element;" said Lantigua, "that is to say, devoting all her energies, with the utmost eagerness, to a perfectly trivial matter which is no concern of hers."

"I am devoting my energies to protect an innocent person against calumny," exclaimed the girl.

"And how do you know that he is innocent? Come. That is what remains to be proved. The best thing you can do is not to interfere but to mind your own business.—And now gentlemen, that being settled, let us go to breakfast. To-day is a high day."

The curé, however, detained them, saying solemnly: "Gentlemen, gentlemen—"

"A speech, shall we have a speech?" asked Don Juan, for the stalwart pastor had raised his right hand, as he spoke, in an attitude little less than Ciceronian.

"Gentlemen, I hope that to-morrow all who are here present, beginning with his Reverence the Lord Bishop of Tresestellas, and including our dis-

tinguished and worthy representative and deputy, Don Rafael del Horro, will do me the honor of accepting a *déjeuner* and favoring me with their presence at a select party at my little country-house at Brijan. I propose to celebrate our victory in a simple manner, with a frugal and unpretending little feast, without any fuss or worldly display, and with no pomp or ceremony, as the primitive Christians may have met at their pious festivals—”

Don Juan saw that the curé was drifting into the sermon style, in a way which was far from pleasing at this hungry hour, so he hastily said :

“We accept, we accept; but just now we have more immediate work in hand. To breakfast my friends.”

In a few minutes they were all seated round Don Juan’s table, which was well furnished, notwithstanding the almanac showed it to be the 24th of July, and so a fast-day.

“Then you accept?” asked Romero.

“Epicures!” said Don Angel. “For my part I will decline Señor Curé, with many thanks.”

“Oh! if your Reverence disapproves of my little festivity,” said Don Romero humbly, “we will give it up at once.”

“No, no, my sons, why should you? Prepare

your banquet which I quite understand is to be frugal and decorous. But I will not assist at it; in the first place, because I do not care for festivities, and in the second, because this one is associated with a political event, and I avoid all political questions."

"I feel deeply hurt that your Reverence will not honor me," said the curé. "Do you suppose we are going to hold an orgy? And the Psalmist says; 'The righteous shall feast,' '*Et justi epulentur.*'"

"And rejoice in the presence of God," added the Bishop promptly. "Do not let us wrest the scriptures, my son, nor maintain that the inspired King recommends gluttony."

"Nay, indeed," said Don Silvestre: "Whatever your Reverence says shall be a law to me."

"Then I say, celebrate your secular festival; but do not invite me because I must refuse. In the evening after you have eaten, I will walk as far as your country-house; it is not a great distance."

"You go down the river a little way, cross the bridge of Judas and Don Juan Amarillo's fields, and there you are at the Copse."

"Yes, I know the way."

At this moment the maid came in with a letter

for Don Juan, who opened it, and after glancing through it, said:

“It is from Daniel Morton. He writes to say he sets sail to-morrow early and takes leave of us all.”

Don Angel cast a glance at his niece. Firm, steady and heroic, Gloria received the blow without betraying the agitation of her suffering heart. Only Don Angel, who was behind the scenes, fancied he could detect a shadow of a cloud on the young girl's face. Don Juan looked at her too. Then the conversation turned on Daniel Morton, but Don Juan Amarillo just then came in; whether he would or no, he was made to take a seat at the table and a mouthful to eat, though somewhat hurriedly, for the justice of the town was waiting for him, to come to some determination in the matter of Mundideo. Don Juan de Lantigua, whose opinion he asked, expressed it, however, as follows:

“I see no reason whatever for interfering with Mundideo, unless it can be proved that he came dishonestly by the money.”

“That is what is to be proved.”

“But have you, for instance, missed anything out of your safe?”

“No, but money certainly does not come up

out of the ground like grass. Caifás must have robbed some one. What we propose is that all the inhabitants of the town should take stock of their money and property, and meanwhile that José Mundideo should be put into prison."

"Still the law—"

"Law or no law—"

"Don Juan," said Romero, addressing Amarillo: "Will you do me the honor of eating with me to-morrow at the copse?"

"Ah, ha! I know already that you have won the election; good for the champion of the Church," cried Amarillo with enthusiasm; then, rising with his glass in his hand, he went on:

"Allow me to propose a toast, gentlemen. To the health of his Reverence, the very illustrious Don Angel de Lantigua, the most noble of the sons of Ficóbriga, the most saintly of the apostles of Spain, the model of virtue from whom we may all take example, a man of eminent piety—"

"For pity's sake!" exclaimed the Bishop putting his hands over his ears and covered with confusion and embarrassment. "Enough flattery, Don Juan, and more than enough. The best compliment you can pay me, and the only one that can please me, is not to interfere with poor Caifás."

All the company then kissed the prelate's ring, and he retired before they took their coffee.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AGAPE.

ON St. James'* day there was always a sort of fair at Ficóbriga, that is to say, a lottery was held in the public field outside the town, and a bull-fight in the market-place; numbers of booths were erected for the sale of fruit and cakes, wine and syrups; one tent formed a theatre; there were national and local dances, and at night a grand display of fireworks. Still, the great event of the day was to be the banquet prepared for his friends by Don Silvestre Romero, who was lavish in all he undertook.

From a very early hour troops of servants had had no rest for hand or foot, and all were superintended by the worthy priest himself, who was an expert in such matters. Provisions were brought out to the Copse in well-loaded country carts, their wheels—never by any chance greased—shrieking

* St. James is the patron saint of Spain, and legends tell of his appearance on various occasions to conduct her armies to victory.

and groaning as they wound up the hill at the top of which Romero's house stood. Something to wonder at was the energy displayed in the enterprise by Señora Saturnina, whom we might dignify with the title of mistress of the house, as she ruled the two or three maids and other underlings in the wealthy priest's household. It may safely be asserted that this estimable woman never closed an eye through the night of the 24th; and indeed she hardly went to bed at all, spending it in beating eggs which fell, crashing by dozens into vast pans, or plucking fowls which were sacrificed in the twilight in cackling hecatombs.

Still, the chief struggle was to take place in the morning, when the kitchen-fire was lighted and the great work was begun, the saucepans began to mutter and the steam of savory messes, after half-filling the house, were wafted out into the high-road, a blessed foretaste of the great cheer that was in preparation. Doña Saturnina and her assistants had not hands enough to hold the pinches of spice and the nutmeg, to squeeze the lemon and hand the cinnamon; while of bubbling stews, larded steaks, well-stirred salads, and delicate puddings, there seemed to be enough to feed a regiment.

At the proper hour two serving-men placed

on the dining-room table a small mountain of bread, and the plate and other utensils were all arranged; enormous baskets arrived filled with heaps of sweets, the handiwork of certain skilful nuns, and out of a burly cask was tapped the rich old vintage of Rioja which, after bubbling in a little whirlpool in a funnel kept for the purpose, danced into the bottle with a sound like a diminishing on a trumpet. Doña Saturnina forgot nothing, but kept an eye on every operation, so that nothing should be omitted, and herself arranged the branches of flowers that were to decorate the table, the toothpicks, the finger-bowls and the other small accessories of a well-laid entertainment.

It was mid-day when the guests set out from Ficóbriga under a sun which was scorching, even in the fresher air outside the town. In front was the carriage which conveyed Don Juan Lantigua, Rafael and the curé himself. Then in another came Don Juan Amarillo with the curé's deputy and two beneficed priests of the neighborhood, and after them, in a break, the rest of the company, friends who had come from the chief town of the province in honor of so great an occasion. Eleven persons in all. As soon as the guests were seated, Don Silvestre said grace, and the *stridor dentum*

began. Doña Saturnina had hit upon the happy idea of setting the table outside the house in the midst of a leafy orchard, and in the shade of two or three poplars, which only allowed a few of the sun's rays to pierce between their branches and fall here and there, as if the objects on the table had been just sprinkled with light. Here they gilded a peach, there they silvered a glass decanter, here again they shone on a salt-cellar, and there on the polished bald head of Don Juan Amarillo.

So far as the most important part of the entertainment was concerned, namely, the food, any praise that might be lavished on it would be inadequate to the reality—to its abundance and the excellence of every dish, though it was splendid rather than refined; like all these monotonous and over-nutritious Spanish meals which seem made for the stomachs of giants, and better fitted to feed and strengthen the bodies of hard-working rustics than to tickle and please the palate of the epicure. First there was soup thickened with rice, enough in itself to fill the hungriest, and then fowls with tomato, followed by pork, also with tomato sauce; after which came the delicate fish of the coast, served with *sauce piquante* or floating in rich gravy. With these there were scarlet crawfish,

displaying flesh as white as snow between the cracks in their red armor, and then meat again 'ruled the roast,' as represented by joints of mutton, cutlets fried in batter and other rich and savory messes, preceded and followed by olives, gherkins, slices of Dutch and native cheese, anchovies and other appetizing morsels, not omitting infant pumpkins stuffed with forcemeat, in which it was difficult, to decide which to admire most, the delicate flesh of the envelope or the spicy fragrance of the soul within, besides any quantity of gorgeous capsicums, which looked as if the guests were eating red-hot coal. And what shall be said or sung of the wines, some of them of the finest vintages of Andalusia? What of the sweets and creams which might have sufficed to regale all the epicures in Christendom?

Finally, the soothing balm of tobacco floated up in the air, and a pale-blue mist hovered over the table, and veiled the guests in a visible atmosphere.

The Amphitryon of the feast, Don Silvestre, had dined well; Don Juan de Lantigua had hardly done more than taste the dishes, Rafael del Horro eat but little, while Don Juan Amarillo devoured all that was offered him. The rest did their best not to disappoint Don Silvestre, who, as

host, exerted himself to the utmost that all should dine well, and found no consolation in seeing that his guests were less ready to eat than himself, but reproached them for their abstinence and himself offered them the dishes that they might help themselves a second time.

One incident deserves mention, as it was a precise imitation of a detail which recurs at almost every political banquet in Madrid. Rafael del Horro proposed that the bouquet, which graced the centre of the table, should be sent to the Señorita Gloria de Lantigua.

While they were all smoking, it struck Don Silvestre that he ought to make a speech, and the worst of it was, that he did so.

“My dear brethren and friends,” he began, “we have met to celebrate a triumph; for it is a triumph, and a great one, an immense one, which will lead us on to a still greater victory, to the victory of Truth over Error, of Virtue over Vice, of God over Satan.”

“Very well said!” said Don Juan Amarillo, opening his little eyes which he had gently closed soon after drinking his last glass of wine.

“We have fought like good soldiers,” added Romero, who loved to use military metaphors even in his sermons, “and we will not cease to

fight. In the sacred scriptures it is written: 'And thou, Jehovah, art the God of hosts, and hast no mercy on those who rebel with iniquity; pursue them with fury, pursue them till they shall know that God doth rule in Jacob, even to the ends of the earth.' Thus, it is our duty to fight when things have gone so far as to require us to have recourse to arms. Ah! gentlemen, if only I had the eloquence and the erudition of my illustrious friend, that eminent Catholic, Don Juan de Lantigua, I might tell you to what extremes, the impious daring of the Revolutionaries has gone, and the painful predicament in which they seek to place all religious and pious men. If, I repeat, I only had—" Here Don Silvestre paused and coughed slightly. All were listening to him with the utmost gravity, excepting that a faint smile trembled on Lantigua's lips, which seemed to say:

"You had far better hold your tongue, you clumsy bungler."

"However—in short—I have not," said the stalwart priest. "I have neither his dazzling eloquence nor his amazing erudition. So I beg leave to yield the privilege of addressing you to him—"

"Oh! if only Don Juan would do us the favor of speaking!" exclaimed Amarillo, pulling himself together in the midst of a nod.

Lantigua laid his hand on his chest and coughed.

“Gentlemen, I really cannot,” he said with modesty. “Rafael, do you speak, you will do it far better than I.”

Del Horro made many protests and excuses, but at last, unable to resist the pressure of all the guests, who unanimously urged him to speak, he rose, wiped his spectacles, put them on, and raising his brows, spoke as follows :

“Gentlemen, no one can be less fitted than I, to take the lead in addressing you. I am young and inexperienced, far from learned, and in no position of authority. I can only ask your favor for such qualities as I possess ; my sincere faith, my perfect devotion to the Catholic Church, the efforts I have made, in my own narrow sphere, to achieve a practical triumph for the Church—that loving Mother, by whom we live, and move, and have our being. It has been God’s good pleasure that the most unworthy of His soldiers, the most insignificant of His servants, should this day achieve a solid triumph in the contest against the unrighteous. He it was that gave me strength to defend His cause ; He gave power to my words, valor to my heart, vigor to my mind. ‘Ye shall be strong in battle.’

“ A deep, loathsome and spreading leprosy is eating into the body of society ; it is the Modern Spirit—a dragon with a hundred heads, each more hideous than the other, eager to tear down the standard of the Cross. Shall we suffer it ? By no means. What can a few hundred of depraved rebels do, against the vast majority of a Catholic country. For we are not superior in attitude only, but in numbers. Let us raise our glorious standard in this crusade, and cry : ‘ Get ye behind us, oh, iniquitous and perverse followers of Satan, for the gates of hell cannot prevail against the Kingdom of Christ ! ’ And then, as I turn my face humbly towards the East, I descry a beautiful and reverend form. At the sight of him my heart fills with fervent joy, though the tears rise to my eyes, as I reflect on the pitiful state to which the evil-minded have reduced the torch which used to be the light and glory of the world. Filled with admiration and respect I hail him : ‘ Great art thou, O Peter ! and not merely for thy goodness, but for thy martyrdom. Of thee too it might be said, in these days, that thy raiment is rent, and for it they have cast lots. Alas ! and how many, after despoiling thee, have cast thee into chains. The fiends in hell shall devour them. Meanwhile, O holy Father Peter ! I hail thee, though with tears ;

I sing a loving Hosanna before thee, and implore thee to double my strength and to inflame my zeal, that I may not be dismayed, in the great struggle that is impending.' ”

As the valorous young man ended, he was enthusiastically embraced by the guests near him, and Don Juan de Lantigua, without rising from his seat, began to speak as follows, amid the greatest attention and the profoundest silence :

“ My dear friends and brethren, I will be so bold as to represent to you that in this struggle to which we are called by the impiety, malicious spitefulness of the revolutionary leaders, it is not enough that our weapons should be keen and well-tempered, or that stalwart arms should be bared for the fight. The best weapon is prayer and the most redoubtable bulwarks are virtue and a noble example. I feel prompted to declare what I have seen and deplore, that the religious mind is much enfeebled among ourselves. I hear much talk of fighting, but little of the love of God. ‘ Many of you shall slumber ’—but we must all wake for the storm is upon us; we must rouse in the spirit as well as in the flesh. Do you not perceive that heresy is spreading everywhere among us? Do you not see even the strongest yielding to it? Do you not recognize the fact that rationalism and

atheism have snatched many souls from the arms of the Church. That every day diminishes the number of earnest Catholics, and augments that of the indifferent or disbelieving? Here we have an evil far too great to be easily remedied. I tell you plainly, you must not only fight, but you must preach. The hour that has struck is not merely that of combat; we must set the good example of self-denial, patience, nay, of martyrdom. These are three words of magical might which will always be of greater efficacy than bare steel."

"Very good, hear, hear! Bravo Señor de Lantigua!" cried Amarillo, unable to contain himself.

"I detest applause and outcry and the deification of a speaker," continued Lantigua. "Honor is God's alone, we ought only to glory in Him who, as David hath it, 'was before the mountains were brought forth and from generation to generation.' However, to continue my remarks, I will say that the universal taint of which I have spoken, this plague-spot, this poison has been introduced among us by contact with foreigners. From the remotest ages Spain has enjoyed the inestimable advantage of possessing the only true faith, without any admixture of other creeds or the debilitating effects of dissent. But time and the evil

nature of man have given rise to a civil power which, to meet the views of malignant foreigners, has left the Church unprotected when its duty, as Saint Felix has taught us, is to leave the Catholic Church in possession of her rights, and allow nothing to interfere with her liberties.

“Now, what happens? Error has struck deep root into our soil. Beware, all good Catholics! according to the enemies of God the precious unity of our faith is in itself an evil, and to remedy that evil they require us to open the door to an idolatrous worship, to the heresies of the Reformed Church, to the aberrations of rationalism—which are as wild as the thoughts of a drunken man. See only whither these baleful ideas are tending, overflowing like gutters of filth when the floodgates of heaven are opened, and the waters tear down their banks, and all the soil of the earth sweeps down, strewing putrefying matter among the bodies of drowned wretches.

“Shall Spain cease to be Spain? No, a thousand times no; we must clear her sacred soil of this pestilential mass, and then in her sky we shall see again the glorious sun of the Catholic faith. If we do not fight for this great end we had better not fight at all.”

He said no more for he was tired, and indeed

he had said enough. Each of his words was gold, as Don Juan Amarillo expressed it, and the compliments and congratulations were vociferous. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and almost—almost was Romero's assistant curé about to take up the parable, but Rafael happening to glance down the road saw his Reverence Don Angel approaching.

"Here," said he, "is one that cometh in the name of the Lord," and the company, accepting his mystical announcement, rose to receive the Bishop.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AT THE BRIDGE OF JUDAS.

WHILE a dozen of laymen were thus occupied in regulating the affairs of the Church, in the strength of a good meal, Don Angel de Lantigua, leaving his niece in the church, where she was engaged in religious exercises, was walking along the high-road, towards the bridge of Judas, with the purpose of joining his friends at the Copse. On one side of him walked his secretary, and on the other his page, and he was closely followed by a number of the halt, maimed, and beggars of the

district, panting after him till he had given them his blessing, which some of them valued more than the alms that accompanied it. The saintly man, with his spirit as calmly happy as was its wont, was proceeding contentedly with his two followers when, just as they were about to cross the bridge—a wooden structure, both old and fragile—he observed that it trembled beneath his feet, nor was he long in detecting the reason; a horseman had come on to the farther end and he was galloping.

“Hey, gently there,” cried the bridge-keeper. “You see you are desired to walk your horse.”

The rider was Daniel Morton, who, as soon as he saw the Bishop, observing too how narrow the bridge was—no wider than that by which the Mohammedan enters Paradise—backed off and dismounted.

“What you, Señor Morton?” exclaimed Don Angel, feeling that all his good spirits had suddenly vanished. Daniel kissed his ring with profound respect and, taking off his hat, he said:

“Your Reverence did not expect to see me again in Ficóbriga?”

“No, I certainly did not, since my brother had a note from you in which you announced your departure.”

“But it was not God’s will that I should set out to-day.”

“Be careful; it is not fitting to ascribe the blame of everything that happens to God,” said the prelate gravely. “God may have permitted this, but not have willed it.”

“I ask your pardon,” said Morton. “But I believe He willed it. I was on the quay at X. with all my luggage, and only waiting for the boat that was to convey me to the steamer out at sea, when I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder, and turning round I saw Caifás, Don Angel, with the most stricken face I ever beheld.”

“Yes, I see—I understand.”

“Caifás fell on his knees before me and said: ‘Señor, in Ficóbriga they say I have committed a robbery, and that the money I have got is not mine. I am threatened by the Justice, and every one is clamoring that Caifás the ugly, the villain, the idiot, shall be put in prison. I broke my word, for I have told them it was you who saved me from misery; but no one will believe a poor wretch like me, and Don Juan Amarillo cries shame on me more than any one—’ In short, Reverend Señor, I had to postpone my voyage to get the man out of so bad a scrape; since, if I had not done so, the very charity I had bestowed, and which in

truth was a mere nothing, would have turned against him, and have served only to plunge him into deeper misery."

"A good thought and a good action," said the Bishop impressively. "So good that I will permit you to cross this bridge, which otherwise I must have barred to you. Proceed—but do not linger in Ficóbriga." He took leave of him affably but a little dryly; Morton pursued his road to Ficóbriga, while Don Angel took that to Brijan; still, at every ten yards he turned his head to see which way the stranger was going. But he saw him turn towards Cortiguera where Caifás lived, and this relieved the anxiety which had begun to agitate his mind.

When the Bishop had nearly reached the Copse, all the servants, great and small, and all the curé's dependants, with Doña Saturnina, like a drum-major at their head, sallied forth to meet him and kiss his ring, whence resulted no small confusion. At the same time he was hailed with shouts of "long live the pride of Ficóbriga." Nor did their importunate homage cease, till he had fairly crossed the threshold of the curé's domain.

"And here are the remains of the banquet?"

said Don Angel, as his eye fell on the disordered table. "Well, it was a good idea to dine in the open air for the heat is suffocating."

"And it strikes me, gentlemen, that the evening will not pass without rain," said Don Silvestre scanning the horizon. "Will your Reverence take some chocolate?" This entertainment was served at the moment, and Don Angel seated himself on a rustic bench. The rest of the party collected round him, with the exception of Sedeño and Rafael del Horro, who went aside to study a sheet of a newspaper.

"Did you say, Don Silvestre, that it would rain this evening?" said the Bishop, helping himself to chocolate.

"I fear it will; the heat is melting. We shall have a gale, and a heavy one; the weather looked exactly like this the day the Plantagenet was lost—and what a day that was."

"Tremendous!" said his Reverence. "And who do you think I met this very day crossing the bridge? You do not guess? Well, Daniel Morton himself."

"Was he going to Ficóbriga?" asked Don Juan with great interest.

"He was.—It seems it was he who gave the money to Caifás."

“The man who does not trust you, buys you,” said the money-lender with a wink. “I do not believe in such splendid charity unless it begins at home; besides this foreigner had need have plenty of money—”

“Still he might very well have done a charity—”

“Charity is the very thing I never believe in—nor a disinterested action of any kind. We are not such simpletons here, Señor Morton! We Spaniards have left off sucking our thumbs, and know a rascal when we see him.”

“My friend Don Juan,” said the Bishop, stirring his chocolate, “we are bid not to judge, that we be not judged;” then, changing his tone and the subject, he went on: “What a pretty place this is of Don Silvestre’s. Everything is thriving, and the labor and care bestowed on it turn to fruits of blessing. Would to God it were the same throughout our beloved country, and that every good seed sown, by wise counsel and exhortation, might bring forth a harvest of good works. See, what apples! what pears! what peaches!”

Don Silvestre was enjoying one of the chief joys of his life, easy as it was, that of showing off his little estate. The Bishop had risen, and Romero leading the way, pointed out to his Rev-

erence the choicest varieties of pears, growing on long lines of espaliers and supported by stout rods all covered with flourishing greenery and loaded with fruit. There were bergamots, duchesses, beurrés, winter-pears, and a dozen other foreign varieties, and the curé invited the prelate's attention to each crowded branch:

"Only look at this—Do you see that? There are no such pears in all the country round."

Meanwhile Don Juan Amarillo had beckoned Lantigua aside, for the discussion of an important piece of business.

"But we must not go very far," said Lantigua, "for it will rain before long."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE DEEP.

MORTON stopped at Cortiguera and Sildo said:
"Father will be home directly. He is gone to the Abbey to say his prayers."

In fact Caifás shortly appeared.

"Here I am," said Morton. "Take me wherever you want me; only make haste, for I must be back at X. by nightfall. Where is this judge

who cannot believe it possible that a man can get money without stealing it?"

"If your worship would not mind coming with me to the house of the notary, Don Gil Barrabás, brother of Don Bartolomé, and giving me a written testimonial to say that your worship did give me the eighteen thousand reales*—"

"Go on and show me the way to his house."

"Oh, Señor! what return can I ever make for all your goodness?"

"Sildo can hold my horse and take care of him till we return. We shall not be long gone."

Half an hour later Morton and Múdidéo were back again at Cortiguera, but in vain did they look round for Sildo and the horse; both had vanished. Sildo, as he stood holding the bridle of the noble beast, had been seized with a sudden and irresistible taste for horsemanship—that is to say, a fancy to mount the steed. He was but twelve years old and had never yet tasted the coveted delight.

"If I get on the horse," thought he, "and just go a dozen yards, as far as the *Five Commandments*, how delighted the little ones will be."

His tickled vanity of course had its way—the serpent spoke audibly to his heart, and Sildo could

* The real is $2\frac{1}{4}$ d English; 18,000 = £187.10, or about \$937.

hear it say: "Jump on to the horse, come what may, and you will ride it every bit as well as Señor Morton, and look as fine and as handsome as he."

But—*facilis descensus!* Sildo went on from the *Five Commandments* to the slope of Rebenque; from Rebenque he crossed the field of Pesqueruela, and then a little farther, and still a little farther.

At last, when he wanted to pull the horse up, he found he could not; on the contrary, it broke into a brisk canter.

Celinina and Paco explained that Sildo had gone towards Pesqueruela, and Morton and Caifás set out in that direction in all haste, but nothing could they see; they went down by the pine wood to the shore, but the young equestrian was nowhere to be seen, and the information they gained from those they met on the road was contradictory. Daniel was almost desperate at this provoking hindrance, and all the more so as they saw increasing signs of threatening weather. Caifás commended himself to all the saints, gabbling out *paternosters* and invocations to St. Anthony of Padua.* At last they decided to separate and follow different roads, to meet again at Cortiguera, and they parted in the pine wood.

* The Saint most to be relied on when in search of anything lost.

Morton, tired of the search, presently gave it up and decided to walk back to X.; in order to avoid passing through Ficóbriga, he made a circuit which took him behind the Abbey. Just as he reached the narrow passage, which runs past the eastern porch, he heard the rusty hinges of the door groan, and looking round, his eyes beheld Gloria de Lantigua. Morton could not have been more startled and agitated, if a vision from Heaven had dawned upon him. His first instinct was to fly to her, but he controlled the impulse, and shrinking into a niche in the old Abbey wall, he stood as still as if he had been part of it. Gloria turned homewards, and passed him like some bright flash of thought across the darkness of his despair. He saw her disappear round the corner of the lane and mechanically came out of his nook to follow her.

“I am condemned never to see her again,” thought he. “Then this once at least—” But he kept at some distance, stopping when he had gained upon her, but hurrying after her when she had got far ahead; and at last, when Gloria entered the garden-gate, he stopped short.

“It is all over—” he said. “Now I will go.” And yet, before he could make up his mind to start, he sat for half an hour on a stone in the side

street, which led from the little Abbey plaza down to the grass slope that led to the shore.

A large tepid drop of water falling on his hand, roused him from his dream and, looking up at the sky, he saw a dense yellow cloud with shadows of the gloomiest grey, and felt that the atmosphere was chokingly oppressive. Then a gust of wind rushed down upon him, sweeping whirling pillars of dust before it, and great drops began to fall which splashed up the dust, making black pits in it, as if it were raining penny-pieces. Daniel, seeking shelter from the storm, which was now upon him, went out of that alley into another, and at last found a large empty shed where he was perfectly sheltered. By this time the rain was falling in a deluge that was positively terrifying, inundating the streets and seeming very capable of washing the miserable little town bodily away.

“This is just how it rained on the wretched Plantagenet the day it was wrecked. It seems to be a fate that pursues me; I came in a tempest, and I am leaving in a tempest. The way of the Lord is past finding out.” And then looking up at the clouds, which were rent by the lightning and pouring out rivers, he said softly to himself: “The waters saw Thee, O God, the waters saw Thee and were afraid, the depths also were troubled, the

clouds poured out water, the air thundered and Thine arrows went abroad: The voice of Thy thunder was heard round about. * * * Thy way is in the sea, and Thy paths in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known."

It was now quite dark, for the storm had anticipated the night, the day was already declining. Morton looked up at the west front of the Lantiguas' house, which was on the opposite side of the street, and saw lights in the upper windows.

"They are all in there," thought he, "by this time, and Gloria is soothing the hours of the two old men with songs that are like angels' songs—O God! how happy are they!"

Time went on, the streets were now rivers; cataracts poured from the roofs as if the floodgates of a reservoir had burst above them; the rain lashed the walls as with a thousand whips, the few passers-by hurried along in dismay. At last, after about half an hour of this deluge, the skies seemed to have emptied themselves; the torrent thinned out, the clouds passed over and Nature seemed ready to smile again, with a revulsion as prompt as her rage had been, as though she had been indulging in a mere practical joke.

"It seems to me I can get on now," thought Morton, "but how am I to navigate these streets?"

It would seem that I am to suffer shipwreck not once, but twice, in Ficóbriga."

As these thoughts passed through his mind he heard voices and shouts in the little plaza and also inside Lantigua's garden. A number of persons hurried to the spot, and Daniel also went forward, slowly, at first, but as quickly as possible when he distinguished Gloria's voice amid the cries of alarm.

"What has happened?" he asked the first man he met.

"The sudden flood has broken down the bridge, and Señorita Gloria is dreadfully alarmed, for Don Juan and his Reverence the Bishop had not returned from Brijan."

Morton found the garden open and went in; the first thing he saw was Gloria rushing across the garden. She was wrapped in a red cloak, and on her head and face sparkled a few drops of the rain which had not yet quite ceased. She was tremulous with the chill and with alarm, and her pretty face was very pale.

"Daniel!" she exclaimed in surprise. "You here! what do you want?" And she fled back to the house.

Morton followed her.

"Good God!" she exclaimed. "Do you not

know what is happening? The rain has carried away the bridge; my father and my uncle must have started from the Copse—oh! I cannot live in this suspense—I must go there at once.”

“But you cannot cross,” said one.

“Yes, you can just get across,” said another. “Francisquin has this moment come from the curé’s house. There is a gap in the middle, but by clinging and jumping he could get across.”

“Is Francisquin here, did you say?” asked Gloria.

“Yes, Señorita, he is here with a message from the master.”

“Francisquin, here, come here!” Gloria shouted across the garden. A lean, dark boy came forward, drenched from head to foot like a water-god.

“And my father, my uncle?” asked the girl.

“Nothing has happened to them;” said the boy, “but no one can cross in a coach, and only with great danger on foot. The river has risen tremendously.”

“Did they give you no message for me?”

“Yes, Señorita; that you are not to be uneasy, as all the gentlemen will stay at the Copse to-night, but will return to-morrow; they will have to go up to Villamojada to cross the bridge at

San Mateo, though I think they would do better to cross in boats."

"Thank God! I am easy now," said Gloria.

At the same moment she fixed her eyes on Daniel Morton; her terrors being relieved, her mind was wholly absorbed in gazing at this ominous apparition.

"Good-bye," said the foreigner, "since I can be of no use here—"

Gloria hesitated for a moment, agitated and confused.

"Good-bye," she repeated. "I thought you were already on your way to England. Has the ship again been wrecked? Good Heavens! you always come with a storm. Why have you come again? Why did you come before?—For God's sake, Daniel, what does it all mean?"

Her eager face betrayed anxious curiosity and the love which mastered her and which had not been wholly beaten out.

"Will you not show me so much favor as to give me your hand?"

The servants, one after another, had left them.

"But I want to know," said Gloria, "why you are here and not on your way to England. I never thought of seeing you again. Why have you

come back?—But no, I do not want to know—I want to know nothing.”

“It was the direct will of God that I should see you this night. Give me your hand.”

“Take it—and farewell.” Morton kissed it with devotion. “Farewell, in earnest.”

“In earnest,” said Daniel.

“Where is your horse?” asked Gloria.

“I have lost it.”

“Lost it! but then—”

“I am going on foot.”

“Where to, if there is no bridge?” Morton reflected seriously—strange! that the bridge should just now be broken down.

“It is a long way round,” added the girl, probing her friend’s very soul, as it seemed, with her gaze.

“I will go to the inn here, in Ficóbriga.”

“To be sure. Good night.”

Still Morton stood rooted to the ground.

“Good night,” he repeated in a tone of anguish. “But are you going already? Oh! this is horrible, and wicked!” Gloria herself could not move from the spot.

“Yes, I am going; I must—” she said sadly. “This unexpected meeting is a trick of the devil. My friend, go. Good-bye.”

“You turn me out? Oh! this is too horrible. But I will not obey, I call God to witness—” and Morton took a step towards the house.

“I turn you from the house, only because I must, because God demands the sacrifice,” cried Gloria, vainly endeavoring to choke down the torrent of her passion.

“It is false! it is false!” cried Morton in a fever of excitement. “You do not love me, you have mocked at me, at me a miserable stranger flung here by the waves, and who cannot escape though he desires to fly.”

“You are not reasonable and kind, as you were last time we met. My friend, if you care for me and respect me, go. I implore you.”

The poor child was almost choked with the words.

“And never see you again!—If I fly, God will drag me back to you. Never see you again! I will tear my eyes out before I obey you.”

“You can see me better in your memory than with your eyes. It was you who advised that we should each make some sacrifice. Why do you now oppose it?”

“Because God himself has led me to you, and said to me: ‘Go and take that which is thine to all eternity.’”

"Who is your God?"

"The same as yours. There is but one God."

Gloria felt her passion seething in her soul; it was becoming uncontrollable.

"Morton, my friend," she said wildly, "I implore and beseech you to go. Go at once, if you care to remain enshrined in my heart."

"I do not care, I cannot care!" he exclaimed with such vehemence that she quailed.

A fearful turmoil confused her senses and clouded her discernment, as the rising of noxious vapors clouds the sun.

"My friend," she said once more in desperation that was almost a delirium, "if you care for my love—and I love you more than my life—go, leave me in peace. Will you believe what I say? I love you more than ever, most of all when we are parted."

"It is false!" he said, "false, false!"

"You are mean!" cried the girl, with a desperate appeal to his better mind. "This is unworthy of you, Daniel; you are not what I thought you."

"I am—as I am," muttered Morton. "I can be nothing else."

"I shall hate you."

"Then hate me. Oh, I would rather you should, a thousand times rather!"

"All ties and bonds between us are broken," said Gloria in an agonized tone. "Leave me—Ah! why do you not leave me?"

"I did leave you—but fate, or God, or I know not what, brought me again to your side."

"God?" she exclaimed. "God?"

"I cannot believe in chance."

"But I believe in Satan!" she cried.

A furious blast suddenly swept down upon them; they could hardly hear each other speak.

"Gloria," said Morton with the solemnity of passion, "in the name of God, who is our creator, I appeal to you—darling of my heart, love of my life—come, fly with me; come, follow me."

"Merciful Saviour!" cried the girl in helpless terror.

"You do not hear the mysterious call of destiny—of God; I do; the sky, the earth, all, everything says to me: 'She is for you.'"

"Oh! go, good-bye, farewell!" exclaimed Gloria clasping her hands over her ears, and tearing herself away, she rushed into the house; but Daniel followed her. She was in, and tried to shut the door, but Morton opposed it, with all his strength, and entered behind her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHAT DREADFUL WEATHER.

"WHAT dreadful weather!" muttered Francisca. "It seems as though the end of the world were come! Mercy! the wind has blown out the light on the stairs—and how the doors are slamming! Roque, Roque."

At the worthy house-keeper's call, Roque made his appearance, half asleep, and met her as she came along the low passage.

"Come man, bestir yourself," said Francisca feeling her way along the corridor. "Holy Saviour! Blessed Virgin and Joseph! how frightened I am! I thought I saw a figure, a shape, a dark object flying up the back-stairs."

"Ah! you see visions, dame Francisca."

"It is bad enough to see you, you ugly lout. Lock the garden door, as the gentlemen are not coming home. What a fearful gale. After the storm, the hurricane; this is the way St. James treats us. It is just as if the demons were let loose, and wanted to lift the house up bodily into the air. Tell me, stupid-head, have you seen the Señorita go up-stairs?"

"Yes, some time since."

"How could you have seen her then, when you were fast asleep? Can she be in the dining-room? No it is all dark. Go and lock the door and light the lantern, and we will search the house."

"Search it?"

"Yes, man; I am not easy in my mind. I fancied I saw!—Holy Saint Anthony preserve us—"

"A ghost, a spirit?"

"There, that will do; lock the door, come up-stairs, and hold your tongue," and they went up-stairs together.

"Ah!" said Francisca as they reached the top passage.

"Señorita Gloria is shut up in her room. I see the light through her door," and going up to it she called out:

"Good-night, Señorita."

Then they went over the whole house, but they found no one. The wind did not cease; it stormed the house, on all sides as if to fling it to the ground, and to tear it from its strong foundations and whirl it away in fragments. It seemed as though all Ficóbriga, with the Abbey and the tower, might be swept away by the tornado, like a boat that has lost its rudder. The trees in the garden leaned

from the gale, their branches waving like wild dishevelled hair, and the squalls of rain rattled like hoofs upon the windows. When the mad fury of the gale abated, the sound was like that of violent weeping, mingled with bitter sighs and piercing groans, which rose and fell, and echoed through the house—a monologue of grief, with imprecations, sobs and tears.

Then the blast rose again as furious as ever; the boughs, in their giddy writhing, lashed each other, and amid the turmoil of noises that filled the vault of heaven, it was not difficult to fancy that one heard the beating of the crushed wings of an angel expelled from Paradise.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A LULL AT LAST.

GLORIA felt as if her body and soul both had been frozen to numbness, and she only very slowly recovered her ordinary frame of mind. When she first dared to cast a glance into her conscience, she was horrified at herself. All was dark and hideous there, and when she remembered

her family, her name, her honor—she felt abandoned alike by God and man.

“Daniel, Daniel!” she cried, covering her eyes with one hand and stretching out the other, as though she saw an abyss before her and was craving help. “Where are you?” Morton clasped her in his arms.

“Here,” he said. “At your side, and I will never leave you.”

“How madly you talk!—you must go—you ought to fly, but ah! for God’s sake do not leave me now. I am dying.”

“Now!” said Daniel resolutely. “Never; nothing shall tear me from you.”

“My father!” she murmured.

“I do not care for him.”

“My religion!”

Her lover was silent, and his head sank on his breast.

“Daniel!” cried the girl, in tones of anguish. “What is the matter?”

He did not answer, and laying her hand under his beard, she gently forced him to raise his head.

“You have said the fatal word. I can never accept that,” said he. “You have frozen the blood in my veins, and wrung my heart as if you had lashed it with a whip.”

"Why are you so agitated?" said the girl, herself terrified at his terrors. "Daniel, friend of my soul, do not widen the gulf that parts us; on the contrary, let us try to fill it up."

"But how?—"

"Let us make an effort, let us amalgamate our beliefs in one creed, and bring our consciences to meet half-way. Have we not sinned together? Then let us be one in something good—in truth. Let us honestly examine what it is that divides us, and we shall find that it cannot be such an insuperable distance."

"In the eyes of Heaven and earth, no—but in the eyes of men—immense."

"O God!" cried Gloria, bursting into tears: "Hast Thou no mercy in store for us?"

"My love, my darling," cried Morton, kissing her passionately. "The moment has in truth come when all must be clear between us."

"And when we must boldly face this hideous question."

"Yes—it is inevitable."

"Remorse stands before us and threatens us with its terrors, still it cries out to us: 'Ye are one now and forever!'"

"Forever!" he murmured.

"We can never part now."

“Never!—and the hour for truth has struck.”

“Ah! Daniel!” cried Gloria with a sudden and fervid surging up of religious emotion. “Love of my life, companion of my soul, husband of my choice, let us kneel together, before that image of our crucified Redeemer, and make a solemn vow this night to agree upon our religious differences, making every possible concession, I as much as you. We are both the children of the Saviour Christ, let us fix our eyes on Him—Daniel, Daniel, why do you turn away?”

Gloria had fallen on her knees in front of the crucifix, and clung to Morton's arm that he might do the same; but he only stood upright, with his head sunk upon his breast. Never had his face seemed to her so beautiful or so pathetic. Pale and grave, his blue eyes looked down with a gaze of infinite sadness, and seen in profile, the line of his features, his smooth brow and soft-pointed beard, made his resemblance to the image of the incarnate Son quite perfect.

“Why do you not even look at me?” asked Gloria in despair.

“I can do no more—” cried Morton with a sudden flash of resolve. “Gloria, I am not a Christian.”

“What?—Daniel. O Mary, Virgin Mother!”

“I must at last tell you all,” said her lover with

the deepest emotion. "I am not a Christian; I am a Jew."

"Holy Saviour!—Father, Redeemer!" The words broke from Gloria in a cry of horror and anguish, like the dying breath of a man who falls stabbed through and again, or who sees a gulf yawn at his feet revealing the flames of hell. Her voice died on her lips, and she sank senseless on the floor.

Morton fell on one knee by her side, raised her in his arms, and called her by a thousand tender names; nor was it long before she opened her eyes; but, seeing close to her own face the delicate, but now unmistakably characteristic features, that had contributed to captivate her heart, she pushed him resolutely away, exclaiming:

"Traitor!—Judas! you have deceived me."

"I concealed my religion," said Morton gloomily. "That was all my crime."

"And why did you conceal your religion?" cried Gloria, starting up with vehement indignation, her black eyes flashing fire.

"Out of selfishness; for fear I might fail to win your love," said Morton in a tone that was almost timid in its humility; "I told no lie, I only evaded the truth—still, I confess it was a sin—a great sin, not to speak."

“Base, infamous!—But no, it is not true.—
You cannot believe in that doctrine!”

“Far more than you believe in yours,” said Morton solemnly.

“It is false! it is false! it is false!” cried the girl, clasping and wringing her hands. “If you were a Jew it is impossible that I could love you—a Jew!—It scorches my tongue to say the word—the mere name of your religion is a blasphemy.—Is it possible—tell me, is it true that you do not believe in Jesus Christ, that you do not love him? If so, Good God! what a horrible delusion—a life of blasphemy, and death undying. And that I should have believed in you so utterly, trusted you, adored you—and then when I thought we should live united forever, one in heart and soul, to be told—O Christ! to be told this hideous secret.—Why do you not write the hideous fact on your forehead? Why, when you saw me flying towards you, did you not say to me: ‘Stand aside, for I am accursed of God and man?’”

“To what frenzy does your bigotry lead you!” said Morton, looking down at her compassionately. “Accuse me, if you will, of having concealed the truth, but do not attack my unhappy race nor yield to a vulgar prejudice that is unworthy of you.”

"If what you tell me is true," Gloria rushed on, "why could you not look as hideous as your religion? Why were not your words, your actions, and your person as execrable as your creed? Traitor! a thousand times a traitor!"

"Gloria, Gloria, love of my life, for pity's sake, control yourself. Your reproaches are killing me."

"Why have you cheated me of my love? Why did you let me love you when you knew that to all eternity we must be parted?" The poor child was wild with trouble, almost frenzied. "Tell me, why—why did you allow me to love you?"

"Because I loved you. It is true, I did wrong, though I knew it was a sin—then, foreseeing the tremendous religious struggle that hung over us, I proposed to you that we should part; the proposal was mine; I could not have acted more honorably—"

"But you came back again."

"I came back—" answered Morton, with the guilty confusion of a detected criminal. "Yes, I came back—I know not what brought me. Everything conspired to bring me back; I was borne on some blast from Hell—or, God knows!—on some breath from Heaven. Man is the sport of the divine forces that rule the world."

"God knows? Do not utter His sacred name!

How transformed you are in my eyes; you are not yourself; I do not know whether I love you or hate you, and if such a state of mind were possible to any human being, I should say that I hate and love you both at once." And covering her face with her hands she broke into a torrent of tears.

"And all for a name, for a word!" cried Morton in agony. "Cruel, iniquitous! It is words that rule the world, and not ideas. Tell me, when you loved me, what was it you loved me for?"

"I loved you because I thought God had led you to me; I loved you for all you said and did, for yourself, for the sweet consent and agreement of our souls.— What for? How do I know?— But no—it was not then that I was deceived, it is now. You cannot be—what you say you are, Daniel, for you did deeds of pure charity."

"But our law tells us: 'Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord shall deliver him in time of trouble.'"

"You cannot belong to that abominable race," Gloria repeated, clinging to her incredulity as to a last hope. "If you swear it a thousand times, a thousand times will I deny it.—If you do, how false, how false you must be!"

"I have been false, yes. It is our custom, our

necessity, when we travel in a country such as yours. Still, to you I ought to have owned the truth; I acknowledge it, I confess it—I plead guilty, hoping for forgiveness.”

“And that I cannot forgive, no, not possibly,” said Gloria with stern determination.

“And yet your Master has bid you: ‘Forgive your enemies; love your neighbor as yourself.’ Is it conceivable that you should share the traditional rancor against us, the vulgar aversion on which the baser class of Christians batten their ignorance and their evil passions? Gloria! By the God who created heaven and earth! I cannot believe that you can so degrade your fine intelligence—”

“Within the fold of Christ, I admit and accept everything, outside it, nothing. The horror that fills my soul is not a mere prejudice.”

“And that horror would not exist but for a word—it would vanish if I could suppress its name. Tell me, does it not seem to you yourself a caricature of your own creed! Either I am mad, or this is the voice of all true humanity crying aloud for its rights.”

“Woe is me! for I cannot tell what it is—” cried Gloria deeply touched. “Why, being what you are, are you to me so entirely lovable? Your

soul, no doubt is lofty and good, and has kept itself unsoiled in the pit into which you were born. One struggle, my friend, one effort, and you will cast off this foul burden. Your spirit is ready for redemption; the slightest impulse, the least volition on your part is enough. Daniel, Daniel!" she continued clinging to him in passionate entreaty: "By your love for me—by mine for you, which this day must die the death or be infinitely increased, I implore you to be a Christian—Daniel give up your false religion, and let us throw ourselves together on the tender love and mercies of our Saviour Christ." Morton clasped her closely in his arms; then, gently putting her from him, he said in a low but steady voice:

"Abandon the religion of my fathers!—Never!"

Gloria sprang from his side, and gazed at him in dismay, as if he were some infernal vision whose beauty added to its horror, and which was all the more terrible for the seductive aspect it wore.

"What have you said?" she exclaimed.

"I, as well as you, have a family, parents, a name and my honor; and though we have no common country, we have a common interest in our sacred hearths and homes, and in the Holy

Law in which we are born and die. From the time of my remote ancestors, who had settled at Córdoba and were exiled from Spain by an iniquitous edict, down to the present day, through a succession of generations of upright Hebrews, not one has ever abjured the Law of Moses."

"Not one!" said Gloria with bitter regret. "And do you believe that they now rejoice in the presence of God?"

"Such as were good men, as my father is, shall rejoice in Him through all generations," said Morton with exalted conviction. "No, no, you will not fill your hideous Christian Hell with Jews."

"I have always shut my eyes to that Hell, and tried not to believe in it," said Gloria, her gaze fixed with abstract horror, "and now I feel as if its fiery gulf yawned for me alone. Oh! what a horrible turmoil of confusion is in my mind! If there is no Hell, Daniel, if none exists as yet, there will be one created for you and me.—But no, I will save you, I will save myself. I deserve to suffer in eternal torment if I fail.—Daniel, awake! open your eyes and come to me!"

"To come to you in the sense you mean is impossible," said the Hebrew with gloomy determination.

"But then—oh! give me words to accuse you

in—what must my fate be? I see, in your creed conscience plays no part.”

“Nay, you may read my conscience as an open book.”

“There is no such grace and virtue as repentance.”

“If repentance consists in grief and shame, for having sinned, I can say: ‘O Lord, I have gone astray and Thy hand is heavy upon me, my grief is ever before me.’”

“There is no discipline, no confession of sins.”

“Yes, indeed, else why should we say: ‘Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me, therefore, I will acknowledge my sin and bewail my transgression.’”

“You say I may read your conscience?” continued Gloria. “No, no, I cannot read anything there. I see in it only the blackness of night—darkness as deep as my own disgrace, as the gulf into which we have both fallen. Kneel, kneel before this crucified Saviour, and then I will believe anything you may say.”

“I will kneel,” said Morton solemnly. “Not before the crucified prophet, in whom I cannot believe, but before you whom I adore, I will humiliate myself.” And falling on his knees at her feet he took her hands and kissed them. “May my

Father's curse fall upon me, and may he cut me off from among my kindred if I do not lay my soul open to you, if I conceal the smallest atom of truth.

“ I saw you, and as soon as I saw you, I loved you ; I believed that my shipwreck was an act of Providence, and that God had destined us for each other. Who can know His purpose or read in His book ? My faith in Him is full and perfect ; I see His hand in everything, and when I break His law, He appears to me more glorious and more terrible than ever.—I concealed my religion from you, alas ! out of utter selfishness. I knew the horror in which we are held by Catholics, and could not bear to ruin, with a single word, the happiness that blessed my soul. I knew you could not love me if you knew, and I was silent.—When I wished to speak, it was too late ; I loved you too much. I was entangled in the meshes of an insane passion ; I felt that my whole life was bound up in you, body and soul, and to reveal the truth was suicide.—Then I thought of all possible means of arranging a union with you, but the religious question always faced me, drove me mad, appalled me more than the thunders of Sinai or the vengeance of Jehovah. At last I saw plainly there was no issue, no solution. Our love was a

horrible antagonism of God and man, a hideous absurdity, a living caricature of religious enmity in its most extravagant development; and seeing this I retreated, and tried to find strength of will to carry out the separation I had advised. We parted, avoided each other, because there was no alternative but to avoid each other as the night flies before the day.—Up to that point my iniquity was not so great?”

“But afterwards—”

“Afterwards—I never thought my resolution would waver. My heart was broken, but I had made ready to quit these shores forever, when the direct results of an act of charity, which, in itself, had neither importance nor merit, forced me to turn back. What led me to your house again, I swear to you I do not know—however, I do not believe in fatality, and it is my firm conviction that nothing happens without the express will of Him, whose hands formed the heavens and the earth, the soul of all that lives. I was the sport of a mysterious power; God sent me here, no doubt to tempt me, to prove the temper of my soul. I have fallen, I have not stood upright; I have fallen as David fell; I have wrought iniquity—what would you have me say?—but I love you, and this love will plead for me before God and

ought to win pardon from you. I do not attempt to excuse myself or throw any false light on my sin—”

“Ah! do not mention the name of God in the same breath with it—”

“I say: ‘Thy justice is as the hills, and Thy judgments are like the great deep, O Jehovah—’ This conflict of our souls is His doing and the love that consumes us. And if we curse our fate, at whom shall we rail? We dare not curse God—we will not curse our love—we can only curse the times, the perverse generations whose inhuman bigotry is our undoing.”

“Nay, curse your own race which, by crucifying Jesus, has put itself forever out of the pale of salvation,” cried Gloria vehemently. “I do not believe in your repentance, for your soul is in darkness. Leave me, quit this place, do not touch me! The very love I feel for you, and that I cannot cast out, increases my horror.”

“Oh! Gloria, Gloria!” exclaimed Morton in a tone of anguish. “Do not stoop to let me feel myself superior to you. I, though I hate Catholicism, can venerate you; I can distinguish between your false creed, which I abhor, and yourself, whom I value above all earthly things. You are to me like an angel, chosen from among the very

children of light. I glory in worshipping you, and if you were my wife, not a woman in the world would be more venerated or more loved."

"I your wife, your wife! Ah! what are you saying?" moaned Gloria. "I, too, dreamed that dream; Merciful Heaven! dreamed it, and thought it possible. How could I look forward to this fearful struggle. God has forsaken me—God has abandoned me forever!"

"If your God has abandoned you," cried Morton, "mine will receive you. 'Thy decrees, oh Jehovah! are as the great deep!'"

"Leave me," cried Gloria turning from him. "Do not come near me."

But she could not prevent Morton from clasping her in his arms. Quelled and trembling, she slid down on her knees, and flinging her arms round him, she went on in a voice full of tears:

"Daniel, Daniel, see me kneeling at your feet—dishonored—lost in the eyes of God and the world. By the love I bear you, by the honor I have lost, by your reverence towards God and the sense of right that is in your soul, I implore you rescue me from this torment. Become a Christian; purge your soul, and with your soul my dishonor. You have wrought fearful ruin; repair it. Perhaps this is a warning from Heaven, for the doing

of a great sin has opened the eyes of many sinners.—If you love me be converted; be a Christian; kneel to this cross, and you will see how your spirit will be exalted, how immediately it will be filled with the true God.”

“Let us make a covenant,” said Morton, lifting her up.

“Well?”

“Follow me—”

“I—where?”

“Home—to my home.”

“Oh! you are out of your mind!”

“Follow me.”

“Very well,” cried Gloria, with enthusiasm. “Be baptized with water, believe in Jesus Christ, and I will follow you; I will forsake everything. Whatever my family may wish or say, I will follow you and accept my disgrace. Can I make any greater sacrifice? But it is well worth it to gain a soul to Christ.”

“My bargain is a different one,” Morton went on with feverish impatience. “Each of us wants to convert the other. If you win the day I will become a Catholic; if I do you shall be a Jewess.” Gloria covered her face in horror.

“It cannot, can never be,” she said. “The idea

of not being a Christian terrifies me more than that of eternal damnation."

"I cannot be a Christian.—No, I cannot."

"Daniel," murmured Gloria faintly, almost sick with misery, "why will you not kill me?—Find something, a knife, only kill me."

"Gloria, my life, why do you not kill me? It is I who should die, not you. I am the guilty one, not you—"

"There is nothing for it but to die."

"God has forsaken us—"

"There is no issue—"

"None in this world," said Morton gloomily.

"No, nor in Heaven!" added Gloria desperately. Her arms fell helplessly by her side, and she closed her eyes; all her vigor of spirit and mind was utterly spent.

She fell on her knees by the bed, and hiding her face prayed in silence. Morton sank into a chair, supporting his burning forehead in his hands.

Suddenly they both started up and looked at each other; they heard footsteps.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

JOB.

WE left the worthy Don Silvestre proudly exhibiting the pear-trees in his orchard, while Don Juan Amarillo, that bird of prey, took possession of Lantigua and drew him aside for the discussion of a serious piece of business.

We have already mentioned this man, whose name so happily suited his personal characteristics. Amarillo was not far from sixty, of deliberate manners, to the last degree methodical, domestic in his habits, great at telling his rosary, bland of speech, but keen-eyed; he commonly held his head somewhat on one side, like an early-ripe fig; his nose was sharp, his head bald; his black eyes were shaded by coarse rough lashes; his beard would have been thick, but he kept it shaved, and his face shone all over as yellow and as smooth as parchment. His one business was lending money; he was the banker of all Ficóbriga, and was ready to lift any man out of indigence at a rate of interest which never exceeded forty per cent.; obviously

on these terms no man need remain poor, and Amarillo was not behindhand in his profession.

With the fortune brought him by his wife, Teresita la Monja, and by good management and economy, in twenty years he could call himself very rich. He was on friendly terms with Don Juan de Lantigua, who was one of the few people to whom he had never lent any money. He enjoyed a reputation for being very religious, as did his wife, who was always very inquisitive as to the proceedings of her neighbors, and so well informed, as to their life and doings, that she was nicknamed the "Mother Confessor of Ficóbriga."

Amarillo took Lantigua's arm, and leading him apart along a covered alley to a retired part of the garden, he began :

"For some days, my dear Don Juan, I have been waiting to speak to you of a subject of some importance, and I ought not to let any more time slip away."

"What is it?" asked Don Juan, somewhat alarmed at the solemn tone adopted by his namesake.

"A very serious affair. What opinion, may I ask, have you of me as a man of veracity?"

"A perfectly favorable one."

"Do you consider me capable of a lie?"

“ No, Señor, not even in thought.”

“ Of backbiting, of calumny, or of false-witness against my neighbor ?”

“ Of none of these things.”

“ Then listen and pay heed to the warnings of an honorable man who esteems you highly, and takes an interest in the honor of your name and family.”

“ The honor of my name! Don Juan—” exclaimed Lantigua hotly. “ What do you mean by that ?”

“ It is not husbands only that are blind ; affectionate and confiding fathers are equally so.”

“ I do not understand you—”

“ Then I will explain myself in two words: You must be watchful, very watchful, of your daughter.”

“ Of Gloria !” Don Juan almost shrieked in his surprise.

“ Of Señorita Gloria,” the Christian Jew repeated. “ She is good, I have no doubt, but she is at the dangerous age of passion.—Not that I see any objection to a young girl having a lover, but at least let him be a Catholic.”

“ Don Juan, what jest is this ?” said Lantigua, turning as yellow as his interlocutor.

“ Do you think me capable of falsifying a fact,

of failing in truth, or of mortifying a friend without reason? When I made up my mind to venture to speak to you, Señor, it was because I was sure, absolutely certain, of the facts. Gloria has had clandestine meetings with Daniel Morton."

"Where?—when?" cried Lantigua, turning from the yellow of dismay to the scarlet of wrath.

"In the pine-grove, a few days ago—and I may tell you that my wife was the first to warn me, and that then I saw with my own eyes.—As it was said that Morton was going away, I held my tongue; but when I heard his Reverence the Bishop say that he had seen Morton going into Ficóbriga, I was alarmed, and said to myself: 'This evening shall not pass without my telling the whole story to my friend Don Juan.'"

"By Heaven!" cried Lantigua clenching his fists and grinding his teeth. "If what you tell me is true.— Who saw them? Who?"

"My wife, and other persons of the town. Morton came on horseback from the capital of the province, where he was staying; and making a round, so as not to go through Ficóbriga, he went down to the pine-grove where he waited for her."

After the first shock, Lantigua had sunk into deep and sullen thought, vacillating between incredulity and alarm. A keen pang had pierced

his heart and he could not utter a word. He felt as if all the illusions of a lifetime had been dashed down at a blow, and he felt like the holy Chaldaean Job, when a servant came and said to him: "Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and behold their came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men and they are dead." But Don Juan neither rent his mantle, nor shaved his head, nor fell upon the ground; but presently, recovering a little from the surprise, if not from the pain of the blow, he said to himself: "It is a lie, it is a lie!"

"We shall be wise to take shelter in the house, friend Lantigua," said Amarillo presently. "It is raining."

And it certainly was raining. All the party rushed into the house for shelter, and the servants hastily carried in the table and the rest of the utensils and furniture.

"It will soon be over," said Lantigua looking at the sky.

"I believe," said Romero, "that we shall have a second edition of that famous day, when we saved the men from the wreck of the Plantagenet. And what a day that was, gentlemen! Rain above

and the waves below—I, I confess, was horribly frightened—”

“Let us go!” said Don Juan suddenly, and with an air of extreme impatience.

“While it rains? Bless me! Don Juan, what a hurry you are in!”

“I want to be off. It will be worse if we wait till it rains harder and till night has closed in.”

“Just as you please,” said Don Angel.

Don Silvestre sent to order out Lantigua's coach, but by the time it was ready the rain had increased to such a torrent, that all agreed that they must wait till the storm had passed over; the roads would be impassable, and Lantigua's coachman, as well as the driver of the break, declared that nothing short of a miracle would enable them to reach Ficóbriga without damage.

“Never mind!” said Lantigua. “Let us start!”

But at this instant the news was brought that the bridge had been broken down and that no vehicle could cross.

“This is a day of misfortunes,” growled Don Juan stamping his foot.

“The bridge broken down! That is just like our engineers.—What a Government we live under! With the money that has been wasted on this

wretched wooden thing, they might have built a bridge of solid masonry."

"There is no remedy but patience," said the Bishop calmly.

"There is no remedy but to set out on foot," said Don Juan. "It is most unlucky; we have not even umbrellas."

"But are you mad? Where are you going?" said Don Angel detaining his brother.

"Gracious me! Don Juan—one might think your house was on fire!"

The road was in fact impassable; foaming cataracts of mud and water were pouring down the hill. However, Romero proposed that a lad of his, named Francisquin, should go down to reconnoitre the state of things all the way to Ficóbriga; in a short time he returned, saying that the road was passable, and that with great care the bridge could be crossed on foot.

"What cowards we are!" exclaimed Lantigua going towards the door. But, for the second time they stopped him, and then it was that Romero said:

"You had better all pass the night here. We have very good beds. The river has risen frightfully, and it is not worth while to run the risk of drowning. If we go up as far as Villamojada, to

cross the bridge of San Mateo, we shall lose at least five hours, because, as you know, the earth that has washed down has made the roads heavy."

It was a matter of great difficulty to persuade Don Juan to remain, but at last they succeeded, and, as we have already learnt, a message was sent to his house.

When Francisquin returned his report was as follows: "Señorita Gloria was waiting in the greatest alarm, but now she is quite easy."

"And who was there?" asked Don Juan with eager anxiety.

"Roque, Don Amancio the apothecary, José, the postman, the school-master Rubio, German—"

"No one else?"

"And Señor Morton."

And again through the fevered brain of Don Juan flashed the words, from the book of Job: "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

"What is the matter, Don Juan? Has your dinner disagreed with you?" asked Don Silvestre looking at his friend.

"Are you ill?" said the Bishop affectionately. Don Juan had in fact turned green.

"Let me feel your pulse," said Romero, who dabbled in medicine.

"By the way," remarked one of the curé's guests, who had come from the capital of the province, "a friend I met in Villamojada, and who is lately come from Madrid, informed me as to the religion of that Señor Morton who has just been mentioned. He is neither more nor less than a Jew."

An exclamation of surprise and horror broke from every one in the room.

"Is that true?" asked Lantigua with a fiery sparkle in his eyes.

"Nothing can be truer! Daniel Morton is the son of an immensely rich Hebrew of Hamburg, a Rabbi of their religion—or as we might say, supreme Pontiff or Pope among the Jews."

"Considering this even, I cannot be sorry that I saved his life," said Don Silvestre with vehemence. "For it is written: 'Bless those that curse you, and do good to those that hate you.'—What a day that was!"

"Well said," remarked the Bishop, pressing the curé's hand. "This is the spirit that I approve of."

And then he sat as mute as a statue.

"In my opinion," said Don Juan Amarillo

solemnly, "we ought not to permit this man's presence in Ficóbriga."

"We ought not to permit it," two or three of the party agreed.

Then his Reverence spoke thus :

"So long as the impious lives the hope also lives that he may be led into the right road. Saint Augustine, my friends, has taught us that the impious man is suffered to live *ut corrigatur, ut per illum bonum exerceatur* ; that is to say, that he may be taught right, and that by reason of him good deeds may be accomplished in us."

Don Juan rose and said decidedly :

"I am going."

His resolute tone indicated a determination so fixed that no one dared attempt to hinder him, and the Bishop, who was beginning to share his brother's uneasiness, added :

"I too must go."

"We will go round by Villamojada," said Don Juan.

"How rash!" said Don Silvestre in an undertone to del Horro. "But when once Don Juan has an idea in his head.—And there is something wrong. Did you see the color he turned? He has an attack of fever."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE THUNDER-BOLT.

GLORIA and Daniel Morton had heard footsteps, and both trembled as they stood there; neither dared move an inch; neither could utter a syllable; they held their breath, and only wished they were invisible air and could vanish into space.

Suddenly the door opened and Don Juan stood in the doorway. Gloria uttered a wild cry; she could not have been more terror-stricken if she had heard the trump of Judgment and seen the Lord of souls appearing among clouds of fire to judge the quick and the dead.

Don Juan went straight up to his daughter, his arm raised—then, as if the ground had suddenly failed under his feet, he fell, a dead weight on the floor, with a deep groan. His venerable head hit hard upon the ground. Don Angel, who had followed him, Sedeño, Gloria, and Morton all hurried to assist the unhappy father. They examined him—he seemed to be dead.

They cried for help, and the servants came trooping in. As they were lifting him up, Don Angel pushed aside Morton with a strong hand.

“Deicide, stand off. Go!” he said.

For the first time in his life wrath was written on the features of the illustrious son of Ficóbriga.

The Jew went out like a dead man endowed with motion.

Meanwhile the doctor had been fetched, and on seeing Don Juan he said he had been seized with apoplexy and could not live many hours; nevertheless, they set to work with anxious haste to apply every remedy that could be suggested, to arrest the progress of the attack and snatch his prey from Death. The victim was perfectly insensible, and his pulse alone revealed the last desperate struggle for life that was going on.

Gloria was so absolutely stricken by remorse and grief that when she was led away from the side of the sufferer into her own room, she could not resist, nor even move. She had fallen on her knees, and there remained, as if petrified, her eyes staring at the ground in fixed horror—like a marble statue intended to commemorate some great disaster or to impersonate Eternal Damnation. Through her trance of sorrow she heard the steps of the priests who came upstairs bearing the

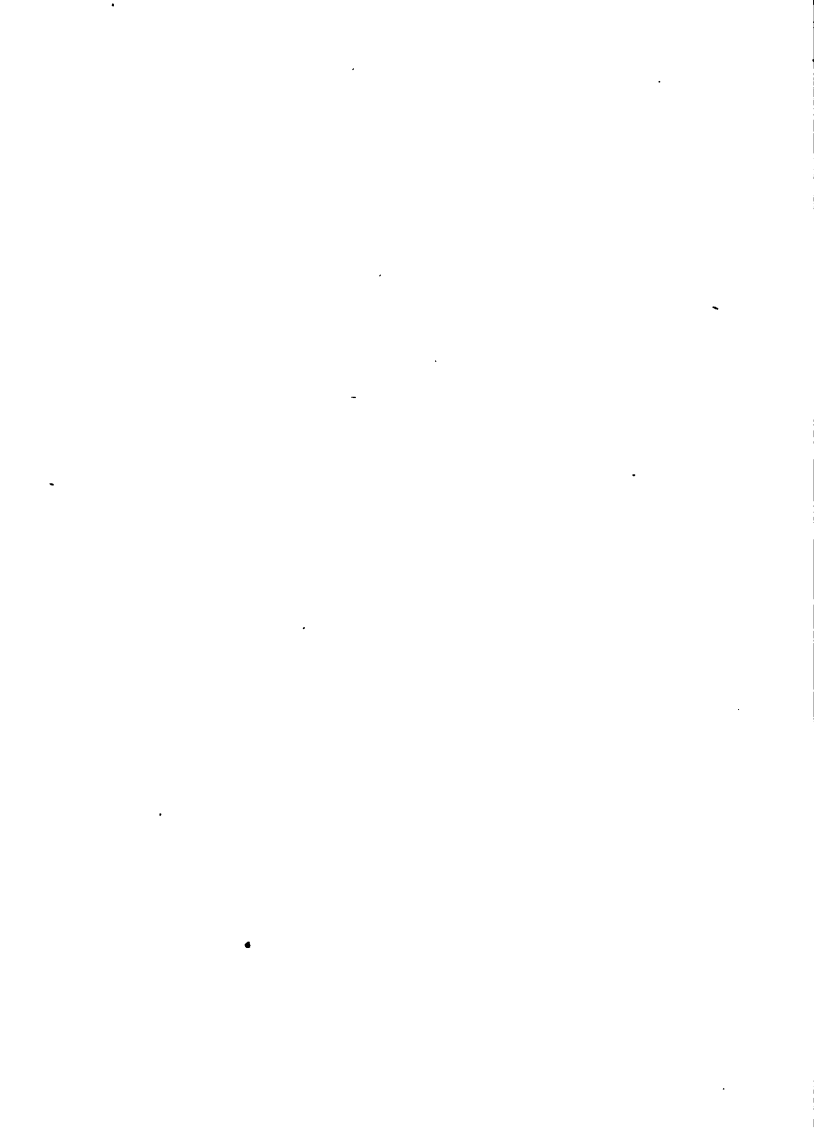
last sacraments—then again she heard them go down, just as the windows were growing grey with the light of a dawn even sadder than the chill and murky night.

At last Gloria saw her uncle come in; he stood before her and said simply: "Your father is dead."

And the saintly man put his fists in his eyes and began to cry like a child.

END OF VOL. I.





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